A COLLECTION OF TRACTS, ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

Written by *THOMAS CHUBB.*

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TRACT XIX.

THE

CASE of *ABRAHAM*,

WITH

Regard to his offering up *Iſaac* in ſacrifice, re-examined.

In a Letter to a Clergyman.

Reverend SIR,

WHEN I had the happineſs of being in your company ſome few days paſt, you was pleaſed to query, whether what I have formerly ſaid, in a diſcourſe concerning *property*, with reſpect to *Abraham's offering up* Iſaac *in ſacrifice*, did not *claſh* with what I have lately ſaid upon that point, in the *ſupplement* to my *previous queſtion*? This query has given me occaſion to *re-examine* the ſubject, the reſult of which I beg leave to lay before you in the following obſervations. And,

Firſt, I here take for granted (as being already elſewhere proved) the following propoſition, *namely*, that *God is abſolutely wiſe and good*; that is to ſay, God always (without the leaſt variation) conducts his actions by the rules of *wiſdom* and

goodneſs; or, in other words, he always does that which upon the whole is *beſt*, or moſt ſubſervient to the common good. And therefore if I have at any time paſt advanced, or endeavoured to maintain any propoſitions which are *inconſiſtent* with the above propoſition, all ſuch propoſitions I now *retract as erroneous*. I thought it proper to make this remark, in order to prevent all objections of this kind. For, ſuppoſing that at different times I ſhould advance two propoſitions *inconſiſtant* with each other, all I think, that would follow from hence is, that my judgment of the ſame point has been *different* at *different times*; which ſurely is a common caſe with thoſe men whoſe opinions are the reſult of a free enquiry, and are not taken upon truſt. I ſay, this is all that will follow, ſuppoſing the caſe as above; for, as to the propoſitions themſelves, their *truth* or *falſehood* does not depend upon my advancing them, but upon the *ſtrength* or *weakneſs* of the evidence which attends them. Again, I obſerve,

Secondly, That *Abraham* ſtood to *Iſaac* in the relation of a *father*, that is, he voluntarily became the inſtrument of bringing *Iſaac* into being; and from hence he became naturally obliged to *guard* and *protect* that life, which he had, by a voluntarily act, been the inſtrument of introducing. For, as life to *Iſaac* was a *natural good*, ſo it muſt be right and fit that every perſon, but more eſpecially he who *introduced* it, ſhould guard and ſecure that good to him, provided *Iſaac* did nothing to *forfeit* his title to life, and conſequently his title to that protection; and whilſt no *circumſtance* attended his caſe, which might render his life *injurious* to the common happineſs, or any other way render it *fit* that he ſhould die. This I take to be a ſelf-evident propoſition. By natural obligation, I mean that it was *right* and *fit*, in the nature

ture of the thing, that *Abraham* ſhould guard and protect the life of *Iſaac*, as aforeſaid. Which obligation as it is founded in nature, ſo it is *independent* of, and *antecedent* to any divine command; yea, it is antecedent to the *conſideration* of a *Deity*, becauſe it muſt and would be the ſame, if there were no ſuch a thing as a Deity. Now if this be the caſe, then I think it will unavoidably follow, that no *ſubſequent divine command* could poſſibly *cancel* or take off the aforeſaid natural obligation; it being a manifeſt abſurdity, and a contradiction in terms, to ſay, that a natural obligation *ariſes from*, or his *deſtroyed by* a divine command; for if it depends upon a divine command, then it is not a natural in the ſenſe I here uſe that term. And, if the divine command could not make void the natural obligation which *Abraham* was under, then, I think, it will follow, that the *giving* ſuch a command, with an intent that it ſhould be obeyed, muſt be *wrong*; and conſequently, that *obedience* to ſuch a command muſt be wrong alſo. But God did not intend that the command given to *Abraham* ſhould be obeyed, as is evident by his recalling it. This I take to be the ſtate of the caſe. Again, I obſerve,

Thirdly, That as *life* is a *natural good*, as it renders us capable of taſting thoſe pleaſures, which the preſent ſtate of things has furniſhed us with; ſo conſequently, *death* is a *natural evil*, whilſt we are capable of thoſe pleaſures. Now, if this be the caſe, as moſt certainly it is, then it will follow, that the taking away of life, *cauſeleſly*, is, in the nature of the thing, *morally unfit*; becauſe it is a bar to the enjoyments of life; and therefore, if *Abraham* had not been obliged to guard and protect the life of his ſon, yet it would have been unfit that he ſhould take it away. And if ſuch an action would, in the nature of the thing, have

been morally unfit, then no *divine command* can possibly change its nature, and make it otherwise.

If it should be urged, that God has *originally* a *property* in all his creatures, and as he gives life to them, so it must be right and fit that he should take it from them, *when* and in *what way* he pleases: I *answer*, *first*, what was fit for *God* to do, and what was fit for *Abraham* to do, are plainly two distinct questions or cases. *God's relation*, and *Abraham's relation* to *Isaac*, are here supposed to be *different*; which relation is likewise supposed to be the *ground* of the fitness or unfitness of their actions, in either case. And therefore supposing *God's* having a *property* in *Isaac* render'd it fit that he should take away *Isaac*'s life, when and in what way he pleased; yet it will not follow, that it was fit that *Abraham* should do the like, seeing it is not here supposed that *Abraham* had any such property in *Isaac*, as aforesaid.

If it should be said, that tho' *Abraham* had no right to take away *Isaac*'s life, upon the account of property; yet it was fit that he should do it, when under a *divine command*, seeing *he* who gave the command had a property in *Isaac*, as afore said: I *answer*, if *Abraham* had not been under a *natural obligation* to guard and protect the life of his son, *antecedent* to the divine command; and, if life had not been a *natural good*, and the taking it away, *causelessly* a *moral evil*, antecedent to that command, then there might have been some *reason* to insist, that it was fit for *Abraham* to take away *Isaac*'s life, when commanded, as aforesaid. But this is not the case; for as *Abraham* became obliged, by his relation to *Isaac*, to guard and protect his life, antecedent to any divine command; and, as the taking away of life, causelessly, was, in the nature of the thing, morally unfit; so *God's property* in *Isaac* could not possibly make void

void *Abraham*'s obligations, nor *change* the nature of things, by making that action fit, which, in the nature of the thing, is otherwise. Again,

I *answer*, *secondly*, that property in any subject does not *lessen* or *destroy* the natural obligations of the proprietor; and therefore it must be right and fit for him either to *exert* or *suspend* his power with regard to that subject, when the circumstances of the case render it *fit* and *proper* so to do. Thus my *ability* to convey my mind to another, by words, is my *natural property*; and yet I am obliged, in the nature of the thing, either to *exert* or *suspend* the exercise of that power, as the *circumstances* of the case render it *fit* and *proper* that I should speak my mind, or be silent. In like manner, if by my labour and industry I acquire a *property* in a *plentiful estate*, my property in that estate would not lessen or take off the natural obligations I am under to promote the *happiness* and *well-being* of the rest of my fellow-creatures; and therefore it would be fit that I should use and employ the *estate* which I had thus acquir'd a property in, to promote the common happiness, as aforesaid. The case is the same with respect to every kind of property, whether it be *original*, *natural*, or *acquired*. But, that I may give a case more directly to the present purpose, I will suppose that God had called a creature into being, and had given it a constitution which might run out to the age of sixty years in a *state of happiness*; and that he had likewise made a plentiful provision of all things, *necessary* and *conducive* to that happiness; now the question is, whether it would be right and fit, in the nature of the thing, for God, from *mere sovereign pleasure*, to cut off that creature in the midst of his days, when no ill consequence nor inconvenience attended that creature's enjoyment of life, And the answer to this question is

moſt evident, *namely*, that ſuch an action, in the nature of the thing, would be *morally unfit*, ſeeing it would be a *barring* that creature of *thirty years felicity*; for as the letting ſuch a creature live out its time would be an inſtance of *wiſdom* and *true goodneſs*; ſo the taking life from it would be a manifeſt inſtance of the *contrary*. And, to ſay in this caſe, that God had a *property* in that creature, would be to urge what does not alter the caſe at all.

If it ſhould be farther urged, that it is equally as fit for God *directly* and *immediately* to take away ſuch a creature's life, as it is for him to do it by an *earthquake*, or a *tempeſt*, or the like: I *anſwer*, this is putting a caſe which is not to be admitted, becauſe, in ſtrictneſs, *God does not* take away the life of thoſe creatures who die by earthquakes, *&c.* death, in theſe caſes, being an *accidential evil*, which ariſes from the natural frame and conſtitution of the world, and which could not be prevented, in the preſent ſtate of things, but by breaking in upon thoſe *laws* by which the natural world is governed.

If it ſhould be urged, that *God* could have recompenſed the loſs of life to *Iſaac* an hundredfold in another world, or he could have *raiſed him* again from the *dead*, and placed him in a much better ſtate than he was in before, and that in theſe caſes *Iſaac* would have been no further a ſufferer than barely the *pain* he felt in dying by the hand of his father; ſo that upon the whole, death would have been a *benefit* to him, and conſequently, it would have been an inſtance of *divine goodneſs* in taking life from him: I *anſwer*, ſuppoſing God ſhould at any time (as an inſtance of his ſovereign pleaſure) take away the life of any of his creatures, and then *recompenſe* that loſs to them, as aforeſaid; yet this would not affect the

the caſe with reſpect to *Abraham*, whoſe relation and obligations to *Iſaac* would be ſtill the ſame. And therefore ſuppoſing it be admitted, that God might, if he pleaſed, have taken away the life of *Iſaac*, as aforeſaid; yet it was *moſt unfit* that he ſhould do it by the hand of *Abraham*. God may, if he pleaſes, uſe various ways of calling men out of this world; he could, by an *immediate operation*, or an exerting of his power, have ſo *ſtagnated* the blood and fluids in *Iſaac*'s body, or thrown them into ſuch a *rapid motion*, or taken a variety of other methods, that would effectually and ſpeedily have put on end to *Iſaac*'s life; and therefore for him to require *Abraham* to kill his ſon, which action in *Abraham* (ſuppoſing the caſe to be as I have ſtated it above, and which I think is the preſent caſe) would have been a breaking thro' an *obligation* that no divine command could poſſibly *cancel* or make *void*; which would have been a very bad *precedent* to others, and have reflected *great diſhonour* upon the *moral character* of him who required it. All theſe reaſons, I think, make it perfectly *unfit* that *Iſaac* ſhould die by the hand of his *father*; and, conſequently, that God ſhould *give* ſuch a command with an intent that it ſhould be obeyed, or that *Abraham* ſhould yield obedience to it.

I am ſenſible that it is ſome men's opinion, that if God had commanded *Abraham* to *hate* his ſon, ſuch a command would, in the nature of the thing, have been *morally unfit*; and yet thoſe men inſiſt, that it was *right* and *fit* for God to require *Abraham* to take away *Iſaac*'s life. This makes it neceſſary to enquire, what it is which renders the paſſion of hatred *vicious*; and, conſequently, what it is that would render ſuch a command *unfit*. And here I preſume it will be admitted, that the viciouſneſs of hatred conſiſts in

its being *indulged beyond its due bounds*, or in its being exercised upon a *wrong object*; and that therefore it would have been *wrong* in *Abraham* to hate that object, which, in the nature of the thing, he ought to *love*. Now, if this be the case with respect to our *passions*, then, I think, it must be the same with respect to our *actions*, that is, it would have been equally as *wrong* for *Abraham* to take away that life, which, in the nature of the thing, he ought to preserve, as it would have been for him to *hate* that person whom he ought to *love*. Again, I observe,

Fourthly, That I think *Abraham* could not, in the nature of the thing, have any *rational satisfaction* that the aforesaid command was *divine*. For, supposing he received information, in the present case, either by a *strong impression* upon his own mind, or by a *dream*, or a *vision*, or a voice from *heaven*, or by the report of a person whom he esteemed an *angel*, or the like; as he could not be *absolutely certain* that he might not be *deluded*, nor *imposed* upon in any of these ways; so, in the nature of the thing, the *moral unfitness* of the action (as in the present case it must appear to be) was a *stronger reason* against the divinity of that command, than any of those *extraordinary ways* in which that command was convey'd to him could possibly be for it.

If it should be urged, supposing that *Abraham* received his information in the present case, in the *same way* in which he had received several divine revelations before; and supposing this revelation had been backed with a *miracle*, or *miracles*, in like manner as the former divine revelations had been *confirmed* or *proved* to him to be such; in this case, surely, there would have been a just and rational foundation for him to conclude that the command was divine. I *answer*, admitting

this

this to be the caſe, then I think that *Abraham* would have been *more liable* to be deluded or impoſed upon, than otherwiſe he might have been. But it would by no means *juſtify* in argument, or render ſuch a concluſion *rational*, *viz.* that the aforeſaid commandment was divine. For,

Firſt, Suppoſing that *Abraham* had before received divine revelations in or by *dreams* a hundred times; yet ſurely it will not follow, by a juſt conſequence, that he could not be *mis-led* by *dreaming*; but, on the contrary, he became ſo much the more in *danger* of being *deluded*. In this way his receiving *frequently* divine revelations, by dreams, might render him the *leſs* upon his *guard*, and he might hereby be more eaſily led to think, that *every dream* was a *divine revelation*. The caſe is the ſame in any other way in which he might receive his informations; his not being impoſed upon, in *many* inſtances, is not a good argument to prove that he was not, or could not be impoſed upon in the ſame way in *one*; becauſe the latter will not follow by a juſt conſequence from the former. Again,

Secondly, Suppoſing that the command for *Abraham*, to kill his ſon, had been backed with a *miracle*, or *miracles*, in like manner as ſeveral divine revelations had before been confirmed or proved to him to be ſuch; yet this does not prove the fore-mention'd command to be divine. Miracles are directly and immediately evidences only of the *power*, and not of the *veracity* or *goodneſs* of the agent that performs them. So that when any thing farther is to be concluded from them, that concluſion muſt ariſe from the *purpoſes*, that the power which is ſhewn by thoſe miracles is made ſubſervient to. And therefore as *Abraham* juſtly concluded, that thoſe former revelations backed with miracles were *divine*, becauſe

cauſe the purpoſes were *good* which thoſe revelations and that power were made ſubſervient to; ſo by a like way of reaſoning it would follow, that there was a *ſtrong probability* that the command, in the preſent caſe, was not divine, becauſe this revelation, and the miracle wrought in its favour, were (to appearance at leaſt, and as far as he could judge) made ſubſervient, not to a good, but to an *evil purpoſe*.

If it ſhould be urged, that what I have ſaid ſeems to be contrary to what is ſaid of *Abraham*, and contrary to the commendation given of him both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*. I *anſwer*, what is ſaid of *Abraham* in the preſent caſe is as follows. *Gen.* xxii. 16, 17, 18. *Becauſe thou haſt done this thing, and haſt not witheld thy ſon, thine only ſon; that in bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy ſeed as the ſtars of the heaven, and as the ſand which is upon the ſea-ſhore. And thy ſeed ſhall poſſeſs the gate of his enemies; and in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed, becauſe thou haſt obeyed my voice.* Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19. *By faith* Abraham *when he was tried, offered up* Iſaac; *and he that had received the promiſes, offered up his only begotten ſon; of whom it was ſaid, that in* Iſaac *ſhall thy ſeed be called; accounting that God was able to raiſe him up even from the dead, from whence alſo he received him in a figure.* James ii. 21, 22, 23. *Was not* Abraham, *our father, juſtified by works, when he had offered up* Iſaac *his ſon upon the altar? Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith,* Abraham *believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteouſneſs; and he was called the friend of God.* This, I think, is all that is ſaid in the *Bible*, with regard to the point in hand; from all which it evidently appears, that *Abraham*'s firſt *truſt* and

confidence

confidence in God, that he would make good his promiſe to him, and his ſtrict *honeſty* and *integrity*, which were ſhewn by his ſteady reſolution to do what he *judged* to be his duy in ſuch a trying inſtance; theſe alone are what *Abraham* ſtands in the *Bible* ſo highly commended for, and which are made the *ground* of God's extraordinary favours to him. As to the *goodneſs of Abraham's judgment*, or the *juſtneſs* of his *reaſoning*, the *Bible* takes no notice of it; neither does it once meddle with thoſe queſtions. *viz.* whether *Abraham* had or had not any *rational ſatisfaction* that the command was *divine*, or whether the action was *fit* or *unfit*; but leaves them to be diſcovered from the nature of the ſubject. But to conclude, I obſerve,

Fifthly, and *laſtly*, What great *difficulties* men are thrown into, in order to *excuſe* and *juſtify* the conduct of *Almighty God*, and of his ſervant *Abraham*, in the caſe I have been conſidering. Men's *inventions* have been put upon the *wrack*, in order to find out ways to reconcile the *divine command* with the principles of *morality*; and they have been led almoſt to give up the natural diſtinction of *good* and *evil*, and to reſolve it all into the *arbitrary will of God*. Whereas the caſe is not ſo *deſperate* as this ſuppoſes it to be; for tho' God did give ſuch a command, yet it was not with an intent that it ſhould be obeyed, as the event ſhewed. And tho' *Abraham* thought it was right to yield obedience to the command, yet (ſuppoſing him to be miſtaken) this only ſhewed the *weakneſs* of his *judgment* in that particular, but not that he had *a vicious mind*; and therefore his moral character is not *blemiſhed* hereby. As for thoſe queſtions, *namely*, *why* God gave this command, and what were the *wiſe purpoſes* he intended to ſerve by it? the ſcripture has given no farther ac-

count

count than that it was by way of *trial* to *Abraham*; and therefore whatever is afforded, beyond this, is but *conjecture*. Thus, in the *ſupplement to the previous queſtion*, I obſerved, that God gave the command to *Abraham* with an intent to recall it, and thereby to ſhew to *Abraham*, and to all his poſterity, the *unfitneſs* of all *human ſacrifices*. But herein I intended no more than a bare conjecture, *viz.* that God *might* give and recall the command, to anſwer the wiſe and good purpoſe aforeſaid; to which I here add, that the command *might* be given in order to convince *Abraham*, that even his *honeſty* and *integrity*, when not under the direction of his underſtanding, might *miſlead* him in the conducting of his actions, of which (to appearance at leaſt) this was an inſtance. And tho' theſe are mere conjectures, yet I cannot ſee why they ſhould be given up, before ſome *better* reaſon for the command he offered; ſeeing they are ſuitable to that *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*, by which God always directs his actions.

I have here but juſt touched upon the caſe of *miracles*. becauſe poſſibly ſome time or other I may treat of that ſubject more at large.

Theſe are the reflections which your *query* has occaſioned: I ſubmit them to your conſideration, and beg leave to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Reverend SIR,

Your moſt Humble Servant, &c.

TRACT

TRACT XX.

A VINDICATION OF GOD's Moral Character,

As to the Cauſe and Origin of Evil, both Natural and Moral. Wherein the caſe of Liberty and Neceſſity is conſidered, with regard to human Actions. In a Letter to a Friend.

SIR,

I Received your kind letter, in which you were pleaſed to expreſs your diſſatisfaction, with regard to what I have ſaid concerning *God's moral character.* You ſay you have read my *previous queſtion*, and the *ſupplement* to it; but it ſtill remains to you a *doubtful caſe*, and the ground of this doubt, is the *evil* which takes place in the world; and, accordingly, you reaſon thus, If God is all-knowing and almighty, and if he is in reality ſuch a wiſe and good Being, as I have endeavoured to prove him to be, then it might reaſonably be expected, that he would *prevent evil*, by preventing the exiſtence of every thing which leads to it, or is any way the *cauſe* of it. But, ſay you, the contrary to this is evident in fact, and that therefore it ſtill remains a *doubtful point*, whether God is in reality a wiſe and a good Being,

or not. I ſhall be glad if I can offer any thing which may be effectual to remove this *difficulty*, and give you *ſatisfaction* in the caſe. The ſum of what you have urg'd may, I think, be fitly expreſſed in the following queſtion; *namely*, that if God is, in reality, a wiſe and a good Being, From whence does this evil proceed? But,

Before I return an anſwer to this queſtion, I beg leave to obſerve, that as the propoſing my *previous queſtion* to publick conſideration has drawn on me the delightful employment of vindicating the *moral character* of *Almighty God*, and as this is a point of the utmoſt importance; ſo I thought it proper, in order to compleat that work, and thereby cloſe up this ſubject; *firſt*, to lay before my reader the ſeveral kinds of evidence, upon which the truth and certainty of God's moral character may be ſuppos'd to depend, or by which he may be proved to be a wiſe and a good Being, *&c. ſecondly*, to vindicate that character, as to the cauſe and origin of *evil*, both natural and moral, by anſwering the queſtion now before me. And, *thirdly*, to improve the whole, to ſerve the purpoſes of *virtue* and *true goodneſs*, by repreſenting to my reader, what it is which will render him truly *lovely* and *valuable* in himſelf, and truly *acceptable* and *well-pleaſing* to God. But, before I proceed, I ſhall make one or two previous obſervations; and accordingly I obſerve,

Firſt, That actions take their denomination of *good* or *evil*, from the good or evil they are *productive* of, from the good or evil *intention* of the actor, or from the good or evil *motive* or *principle* they ſpring from, and which is the ground or reaſon of them. So that an action may be good in one reſpect, and evil in another. As thus, one man may intend to kill another, and that very action, which was deſign'd to procure the man's death,

death, may be the meant of preſerving his life. In this caſe the action is *good*, with regard to its effect; life is preſerv'd by it, but it is evil, with reſpect to the deſign of the actor, inaſmuch as death was intended. Yea, an action may be good in both theſe reſpects, and yet be evil with regard to the motive or principle it ſprings from. As thus, one man relieves another in diſtreſs, with an intent to miniſter that relief; and he does this, not becauſe it is right and fit, in the nature of things, and out of pity to the diſtreſs'd, but only, that he may render himſelf capable of doing ſome *greater miſchief*, when a proper occaſion offers. In this caſe the action is good, with regard to its *effect*, the diſtreſſed perſon is relieved; and it is good, with reſpect to what was *immediately intended* by the actor, *viz.* he intended to miniſter that relief; but it is evil, with regard to the *motive* or *principle* it ſprung from, and which was the *ground* or *reaſon* of it. And, as actions take their denomination of good or evil, upon the different accounts above-mentioned; ſo it is the latter of theſe, in which the *morality* or *immorality* of the action is concerned. An action may be good, with regard to its effect, and the actor may intend, that that good effect ſhould be produced by it (as in the inſtance above) and yet that action would be evil, in a *moral* ſenſe, if the motive or principle, it ſprung from, was evil and vicious. Again, I obſerve,

Secondly, That virtue or goodneſs comes under a two-fold conſideration, viz. *abſolute* and *relative*. By abſolute, I mean virtue or goodneſs conſider'd *abſtractedly*, or that which has an *intrinſick goodneſs* in it, when conſidered ſimply in itſelf, and which does not derive its virtuouſneſs from its *relation* to any other thing. Virtue or goodneſs, conſidered as abſolute, is reducible into a very narrow compaſs,

paſs, conſiſting only in one ſingle point; *namely*, in the *communicating happineſs* to the ſuitable ſubjects of it, or in the endeavouring to do it, by doing or avoiding what appears to be proper for the attainment of that end, from a ſenſe of the *fitneſs* of ſuch a temper and conduct. This is goodneſs itſelf, or what is ſuch conſider'd abſtractedly, it not deriving its virtuouſneſs from its relation to any other thing. By relative virtue, I mean that which derives its virtuouſneſs from its *relation* to *goodneſs*, that is, from its relation to what is abſolutely good and virtuous, as above explained. Virtue or goodneſs, under this conſideration, is more extenſive, and includes in it *truth*, *juſtice*, *temperance*, and the like. Theſe, as they derive their virtuouſneſs from their relation to goodneſs; ſo there are circumſtances which will change their nature, and make them otherwiſe; that is to ſay, tho' the practice of theſe, in almoſt every inſtance, tends to the common good, yet there may be ſome poſſible caſes, in which it may be otherwiſe. Having made the above obſervations, I ſhall now proceed to what I propoſed; *namely*,

Firſt, To lay before my reader the *ſeveral kinds of evidence*, upon which the truth of God's moral character may be ſuppos'd to depend. And all the proof, which this point is capable of, may, I think, be rang'd under theſe three heads, *viz. firſt*, divine teſtimony; *ſecondly*, experience and obſervation; and, *thirdly*, the nature and reaſon of things. The proof, which each of theſe afford, I ſhall conſider diſtinctly. And,

Firſt, I am to enquire, what proof *divine teſtimony* affords, or can afford, with regard to the grand queſtion now before us? And in order to ſet this matter in a true light, I will ſuppoſe a perſon upon the enquiry, whether God is in reality a *wiſe* and a *good* Being, *&c.* I will likewiſe conſider

ſider him, as ſeeking for ſatisfaction from *divine revelation*, and that therein he finds God teſtifying of himſelf, that he is really wiſe and good, as aforeſaid. I ſay, ſuppoſing as before, yet *this alone* does not prove the point, becauſe in this caſe here is another point taken for granted, *viz.* that *God will not deceive*; which point muſt not be preſumed, but proved. For as the idea of *veracity* is not directly contained in the idea of *neceſſary exiſtence*; ſo if God, or the neceſſary exiſtent Being, may deceive, then his teſtimony alone is no *certain proof* in the caſe. So that, before any thing, and conſequently the point in queſtion, can be proved from *divine revelation*, this point muſt firſt be proved, *viz.* that *God will not deceive*, at leaſt in all thoſe caſes, in which the truth of the revelation is for our *advantage*, and the diſappointing our truſt will be to our *loſs*. I ſay, the nature of the thing requires, that we have a well-grounded aſſurance, that God will not deceive us, in any of thoſe caſes, before we can have any juſt ground of *confidence*, in any thing which he has revealed. Again, ſuppoſe the fore-mentioned perſon carries his enquiry farther, and examines, whether God is a *God of truth*, and conſequently, whether his teſtimony may be *abſolutely relied upon*, in this, or in any other caſe; and ſuppoſe he ſeeks for ſatisfaction from *divine revelation*, as before, and that therein he finds God teſtifying of himſelf, that he will not *deceive* nor *impoſe* upon his creatures; yet this, and conſequently the fore-mentioned point, is not proved by it, there being juſt the ſame ground of *uncertainty* as before. Here is a perſon, witneſſing for himſelf, that he will not deceive; but whether he will, or no, is ſtill the queſtion; becauſe he may deceive in this, as well as in any other caſe, here being no more than his own teſtimony concerning himſelf, which

teſtimony alone, in the nature of the thing, is not a proper foundation for *credit*, nor a ſufficient ground of *certainty*. And this brings me to conſider,

Secondly, What proof *experience* and *obſervation* afford, in the caſe under conſideration? And theſe, ſo far as we are capable of judging from them, bear their teſtimony, that God is a wiſe and a good Being, *&c.* Whoever takes a view of the creation, cannot but ſee the marks of *wiſdom*, and *goodneſs*, that run thro' the whole. This is abundantly evident to all thoſe, who are qualified to examine, and look into the works of nature. The late diſcoveries that have been made in *aſtronomy*, *anatomy*, and all the parts of *natural philoſophy*, abundantly ſatisfy the curious and inquiſitive, that God, has in all his works, *wiſely* exerciſed his natural properties, to ſerve the purpoſes of *benevolence*. But then, it muſt be remember'd, that the practiſing an action, which is productive of *real good*, and the frequent repetition of ſuch actions, are not certain ſigns of a *moral property* (that is, that thoſe actions proceed from a principle of true goodneſs) becauſe the ground, or reaſon of them, may be not a *moral motive*, but ſome other caſe; ſeeing God may, with regard to his natural liberty, act from arbitrary pleaſure, or from vain-glory, that he may have the empty praiſe of his creatures, and the like. And conſequently, tho' the repeated inſtances of God's performing actions, that are productive of much good, and the want of an inſtance of his ever practiſing the contrary, are a *ſtrong preſumption*, and make it *highly probable*, that ſuch a moral property takes place in him; yet theſe alone do not amount to an *abſolute proof*, that it certainly is ſo; becauſe the action, tho' ever ſo often repeated, is not ſufficient to diſcover the *motive*

it proceeded from. And this leads me to enquire,

Thirdly, What proof the *nature of things* affords, in order to evince the truth and certainty of the point in queſtion? And here I muſt beg leave to re-aſſume the argument which I have already laid down (both in my *previous queſtion*, and in my *ſupplement* to it) and repreſent it more at large, for the *fuller eſtabliſhment* of the preſent propoſition. That God is, and what he is with regard to his natural properties, I ſhall not enquire into, nor enter upon the proof of; but ſhall take it for granted, that God is, and that he is neceſſarily an immenſe, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, a ſelf-ſufficient, and an unchangeable Being. This being allowed, from hence it will follow, that as God is always capable of doing what is moſt *worthy* and *valuable* in itſelf, and which, in the nature of things, is *right*, *good*, *beſt* and *fitteſt* to be done, ſeeing he knows wherein the goodneſs, fitneſs, and valuableneſs of every action lies; ſo he *always will act thus*, becauſe right, good, fit, *&c.* are ſo very beautiful, and excellent in themſelves; and are ſo preferable, in the nature of things, to their contraries, that they always will afford a *proper* and *ſufficient motive* to influence the divine will, and conſequently to direct God's actions, in all his dealings with his creatures, ſeeing he cannot poſſibly have any *ſelf-intereſt* to miſlead him, and therefore cannot poſſibly be under a temptation to act otherwiſe. And, thus I prove, that God will always exerciſe his *natural properties*, (*viz.* his knowledge and power) to ſerve the purpoſes of *benevolence*. For as God cannot but know, from the nature of the thing, that the communicating of happineſs, in the moſt proper way, is proſecuting the *moſt noble* and *valuable end*, which his natural properties

are capable of proſecuting, and attaining; ſo this will always be a *reaſon*, or *motive* ſtrong enough to induce him, when he does act, to exerciſe his knowledge and power in ſerving theſe purpoſes; and will always ſecure him from proſecuting their contraries. And, thus, from the nature of things, I prove God to be a *God of truth*, who will not deceive with a lie. For tho' God can have no intereſt of his own to ſerve, in any revelation that he makes to his creatures, and conſequently, can have no *excitement* from *ſelf-intereſt*, to reveal either truth or falſhood; yet, thoſe, to whom he gives a revelation, are capable of being *intereſted in it*; and when that is the caſe, then the nature of the thing requires, or makes it fit, that they ſhould be dealt *fairly*, and *candidly* with; and conſequently, there is a moral unfitneſs in *deceiving them*, it being a deceiving them to their hurt. And as truth, in *ſuch a caſe*, is right, and fit, and highly preferable to deceit, and falſhood; ſo this will always diſpoſe ſuch a Being as God is, to prefer the former to the latter, and to govern his actions accordingly; ſeeing he cannot poſſibly be under a temptation, from any other motive, to act otherwiſe. And, thus I prove, that God governs his actions by the principles of reaſon. By which I mean, that God in his dealings with his creatures, with regard to what he requires from, and diſpenſes to them, whether in a way of favour or diſpleaſure, does not act arbitrarily, or from mere will and pleaſure; but on the contrary, he makes the reaſon of things the rule, and meaſure of his actions. He has a regard to the *moral fitneſs* of what he requires, and to the *ſuitableneſs* of the *ſubjects*, to whom his corrections and his favours are diſpenſed. To command what is *fit* and *ſuitable* for a wiſe and good being to command, and what is *proper* for creatures conſti-

conſtituted, circumſtanced, and related as we are, to be in the practice of is ſo *right*, and *agreeable* in itſelf, and ſo *preferable* to its contrary, that God will be diſpoſed, from the reaſon of the thing, to make it the *rule*, and *meaſure* of his authority. Whereas, on the other ſide, to be arbitrary in his government, and thereby to act the part of a *weak* and *childiſh*, or of an *evil* and *vicious* being, is ſo *mean* and *diſreputable*, that God will, upon that account, be at the fartheſt diſtance from it. Again, to love and value, to hate and deſpiſe *arbitrarily*, either perſons, or things, without regarding the *ſuitableneſs* or the *unſuitableneſs* of the perſons, or the things themſelves; or on the other hand, to love and value what is *truly lovely* and *valuable* in itſelf, and to hate and deſpiſe what is *really diſagreeable*, in the nature of things; the latter of theſe is ſo right and fit, and ſo preferable to the former, that God will be diſpoſed, upon that account, to make it the *rule* and *meaſure* of his actions. Thus again, to reward, and puniſh *arbitrarily*, without making the *fitneſs* of things, and the *ſuitableneſs* of the ſubjects, the rule, and meaſure of ſuch diſpenſations; or on the other hand, to reward and puniſh according to the *rules* of *reaſon*, that is, according as creatures have made themſelves, by their perſonal virtuouſneſs or viciouſneſs, more or leſs, the ſuitable and proper objects of his approbation or diſlike; the latter of theſe is ſo *right* and *fit* in it ſelf, and ſo *preferable* to the former, that God will be diſpoſed, from the reaſon of the thing, to make it the *rule* and *meaſure* of his actions.

From what I have ſaid, I think, it plainly appears, that the *nature of things* evidently, and certainly, proves God to be a *wiſe*, and *good Being*; who prudently exerciſes his natural properties, to ſerve the purpoſes of *benevolence*, and that he

governs his actions by the principles of *reaſon*. The ſum of the evidence in ſhort is this, *namely*, that as a *right uſe* and *application* of knowledge and power, to ſerve the purpoſes of kindneſs and benevolence, and as acting by the *rules* of *reaſon*, are truly *valuable* and *excellent* in themſelves, and highly *preferable*, in the nature of the thing, to their contraries; ſo, ſuch a Being as God is, who has, independently in himſelf, all knowledge and power, and therefore perfectly knows the *moral* difference betwixt theſe, and is at *liberty* (with regard to every other being, and with regard to any natural or phyſical neceſſity) for the choice of either of theſe, and has no ſelf-intereſt to *miſlead* him; he will, from the nature of the thing, be diſpoſed to prefer, in his choice, a *right uſe* of his natural properties, and a *rational* conduct, before their contraries. Having thus examined the ſeveral kinds of evidence, upon which the *truth* of God's moral character may be ſuppoſed to depend, and thereby proved, at large, that God is in reality a *wiſe*, and a *good Being*, &c. I now proceed,

Secondly, To vindicate that character, as to the *cauſe* and *origin* of evil, by returning an anſwer to the grand queſtion now in debate, *namely*, that if God is in reality a wiſe and good Being, *From whence then does evil proceed?* To which I anſwer, that this poſſibly is a knot that is more eaſily *cut* than *untied*; and tho' no man could be able to give a ſatisfactory anſwer to this queſtion, yet that would not *weaken* the evidence which I have produced, much leſs would it prove God to be *otherwiſe*, than what I have endeavour'd to prove him to be; becauſe the difficulty in this caſe may not ariſe from the ſtate of things, but from the *weakneſs* of our underſtandings, and the *ſhortneſs* of our knowledge, which render us uncapable

uncapable of ſeeing *thro'*, and to the *end* of them. The evil, that is in the world, is uſually diſtinguiſhed into two ſorts, *namely*, *natural* and *moral*.

As to natural evil, this is occaſioned partly by the *follies* and *vices* of men, partly by *ſuperſtition*, and other like cauſes, with which God is not in the leaſt concern'd, and therefore it cannot, with any colour of *juſtice*, be put to any of his account. And, as to all thoſe evils which are the conſequence of the *natural frame* and *conſtitution* of the *world*, theſe plainly appear to be the effect and produce of *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*. For tho' particular perſons are accidentally ſufferers by theſe means, yet the *good* of the *whole* is perſecuted, and carried on by them. Thus, ſtorms and tempeſts accidentally become the occaſion of much evil to *many individuals*; and yet theſe are *neceſſary*, as they *rarify* the *air*, and thereby render this planet a convenient habitation for a multitude of creatures, whom God hath provided to taſt plentifully of his *goodneſs* upon it; and as the not removing the *cauſe* of theſe diſorders would *introduce* more evil, upon the *whole*, than is introduced by the diſorders themſelves. And, as to pain itſelf, which perhaps conſtitutes the ſtrongeſt part of the objection, our being *liable* to it poſſibly is *neceſſary*, in order to render us *capable* of taſting the pleaſures of life. Pain and ſenſible pleaſure, for any thing we can ſee to the contrary, are ſo *connected* (if I may ſo ſpeak) in the nature of things, that we cannot be *capable* of the one, but we muſt be *liable* to the other. That very capacity, we have to taſte the pleaſures of life, renders us capable of their contraries. Beſides, pain, in the nature of the thing, is highly neceſſary, as it is the great *guard* and *ſecurity* of life. If the refraining from food, or the being wounded, or

bruiſed, or the touching of fire, or the like, did not *give pain*, then life and health, and all the enjoyments ariſing from them, would be guardleſs. Men would be perpetually running into danger, were they not under ſome ſenſible reſtraint; and therefore pain is wiſely provided to be a guard and a ſecurity from it. So that, natural evil, as far as God is concern'd in the production of it, is the effect of *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*. It is true, God might, if he pleaſed, have prevented this ſort of evil; but then he would have prevented himſelf from exerciſing that *kindneſs* and *benevolence*, which he has ſo plentifully diſpenſed thro' the world. But,

Poſſibly, it may be thought, that the *great difficulty* is ſtill behind; for tho' that good, which is in the world, could not take place, in the preſent ſtate of things, without giving *occaſion* for the evils, aforeſaid; yet this, at beſt, is but doing that which is productive *partly* of *good*, and *partly* of *evil*. Whereas if God be ſuch a wiſe and good Being, and be indued with ſuch knowledge and power, as is here ſuppoſed, then he would take care ſo to act, as that evil ſhould not be the *neceſſary conſequence* of *his productions*; becauſe evil is the ſame in itſelf, and is as fit to be *avoided* or *prevented*, whether it be produced by accident or deſign, ſeeing ſuch accidents are ſuppoſed to be foreſeen. To which it may be replied; this objection is founded upon a ſuppoſition, that it is *poſſible, in the nature of things*, for God to give us thoſe pleaſures we here enjoy, without our being *any way liable* to their contraries. Whereas, this may poſſibly be a miſtake; and, till it be made good, the objection will be of no force. Beſides, there is a *ſtrong preſumption*, that what is ſuppoſed in the objection is not the caſe. For as God will be diſpoſed, from the moral fitneſs of

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the thing, to diſpenſe his favours to his creatures in ſuch a way as will *moſt effectually* contribute to their happineſs; and as the giving us pleaſures in a way, wherein we are not liable to their contraries (ſuppoſing ſuch a thing can be) *ſeems more likely* to anſwer that end, than giving them in the way he now does; ſo this makes it *highly probable*, that it is not poſſible, in the nature of things, for us to *taſte* thoſe pleaſures, without our being *liable* to their contraries; ſeeing they are given in a way, in which we are capable of ſuffering all the evils we at preſent are liable to. And tho' I would by no means take upon me, *abſolutely*, to determine what is, or is not poſſible, in the nature of things; yet, with regard to the preſent queſtion, I beg leave to offer what follows.

Happineſs and miſery are not only diſtinguiſhed from, but are uſually conſidered as oppoſite and contrary to each other. By happineſs I mean *pleaſure* and *delight*, that is, the happy perſon is pleaſed and delighted. And by miſery I mean, *uneaſineſs* and *grief*, that is, the miſerable perſon is uneaſy and grieved. The happineſs which mankind are here capable of enjoying, or at leaſt, which *nature* leads them to, may, I think, be rang'd under theſe three heads, *viz. ſenſible*, *intellectual*, and *moral*. By *ſenſible* happineſs, I mean that pleaſure and delight which ariſes from the enjoyment of *ſenſible objects*; with regard to which I have already obſerved, that the capacity we have, for taſting thoſe pleaſures, render us capable of their contraries, And to ſay, in this caſe, that it is poſſible for things to be ſo diſpoſed, as that we may be *capable* of ſuch pleaſures, without our being *any way liable* to their contraries, is to preſume a point, without any thing in reaſon or experience to ſupport it. By *intellectual* happineſs, I

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mean that pleaſure which ariſes from the *diſcovery* and *contemplation* of *truth*; with regard to which I have this to obſerve, that all the pleaſure we taſte, of this kind, are either to our *preceding ignorance*, to the *care* and *pains* we take in the diſcovery of truth, or to the *degree* of our knowledge, when we attain to *a greater meaſure* than other men. All truth, when conſider'd ſeperate from theſe, is alike as truth (tho' not of the like importance to us) the object of the underſtanding, and as ſuch it muſt afford the ſame delight. If we all could, with equal eaſe and clearneſs, ſee all the relations of things, they muſt all, in the nature of the thing, equally effects us. We ſhould taſte as much pleaſure in knowing and contemplating that two and two make four, as in knowing or contemplating any propoſition which now appears the *moſt difficult*, and ſo affords the moſt pleaſure; or rather, we ſhould not have pleaſure from any of them. Now if this be the caſe, then it is evident, that the *capacity* we have, for taſting this kind of pleaſure, renders us *capble* of its contrary. We could not be delighted in the diſcovery or contemplation of truth, if we were not capable of being ignorant, and of the unhappineſs which ariſes from it. By *moral* happineſs, I mean that pleaſure and delight which ariſes from the *love* and *practice* of *virtue* or *goodneſs*. This pleaſure as it is the moſt noble and excellent in its nature, and as it is what mankind ſeems deſign'd to taſte upon this globe, ſo it is the moſt permanent and durable. Other pleaſures drop in the enjoyment, and the *indulging* them to any great degree deſtroys them; but this kind of pleaſure, the more it is indulged, the more it increaſes; and yet, *goodneſs* cannot take place, without *indigent objects* for it to be exerciſed upon; and conſequently the ſuppoſition of *moral happineſs*, with regard to us, ſuppo-

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ſes likewiſe a *poſſibility* of *vice* and *miſery*. If there are any other ways of being happy, than thoſe I have been conſidering, theſe, I imagine, will appear to have their *allay*, like thoſe above-mentioned, that is, we cannot be capable of ſuch pleaſures, without our being liable to their contraries. Thus I have, in ſome meaſure, vindicated the *goodneſs* of *God*, by anſwering what is urged againſt it from *natural evil*; and have ſhewn, that if God had prevented it, he would have prevented himſelf from exerciſing his goodneſs and loving-kindneſs in that way, in which he now gives pleaſure and delight to his creatures.

As to moral evil, this poſſibly may be reducible into a much narrower compaſs, than it is uſually thought to be. For as there are many things that are *eſteemed virtuous*, which have no *moral goodneſs* or *virtuouſneſs* in them; ſo there are many other things that are *eſteemed vicious*, which have no *moral turpitude* or *viciouſneſs* in them. And, as to that which properly conſtitutes *vice*, or *moral evil*; this is occaſioned by that *liberty* and *freedom* of action, which God, by conſtituting us *moral agents*, has rendered us capable of. By liberty, in this caſe, I mean, that every man has *power* to act, or to refrain from acting, *agreeably* with, or *contrary* to any motive that preſents, without being *conſtrained* to it by any foreign power or agent whatever.

Man is a compound being, conſiſting partly of *underſtanding*, partly of *appetite*, of *affection*, &c. and each part of this compoſition affords a diſtinct kind of *motive*, or *excitement* to action, or to refrain from acting. And thus a man is excited to act, or to refrain from acting; ſometimes from a motive ariſing from one part of his compoſition, ſometimes from another, and ſometimes from

from ſeveral motives ariſing from ſeveral parts of that compoſition. And, tho' motive is *neceſſary* to action, ſeeing the active faculty will not be exerted without ſome *previous reaſon* to induce to it, yet we are not the leſs free; for as motives influence by *perſuation*, and not by compulſion ſo every man has power to *comply* with, or to *reject* theſe excitements, that is, every man is at liberty to act, or to refrain from acting, agreeably with, or contrary to what each of thoſe motives, conſidered *ſingly*, would excite him to. And that this is the caſe, is evident in fact; we feel or experience ſuch a power, or that we are thus at liberty, and every action we do is the product of ſuch a choice. And, tho' when an excitement to action takes place, ſome motive or other will *finally prevail*; and that motive, with regard to the event, is as effectual to *produce* or *prevent* the action as phyſical neceſſity; yet there is not the like *compulſion* in one caſe, as in the other. The motive that prevails being not a *power*, or *active cauſe*, but barely a *paſſive reaſon* of, or an excitement to the action, or to the refraining from acting. There being this apparent difference between *motive* and *phyſical neceſſity*, *viz.* the one *forces*, the other does but *invite*; one is an *addreſs* to an *active*, the other is *acting upon* a *paſſive being*; the one ſuppoſes *liberty*, the other *paſſiveneſs* in the ſubject influenced or wrought on by them. And conſequently man has *power* and is as much at *liberty* to reject the motive that *does prevail*, as he has power, and is at liberty to *reject* thoſe motives that do not. To this I may add, that if motives did work *irreſiſtably*, then the active power would *unavoidably* be *excited* to act, or be *reſtrained* from acting, whenever any *motive* is preſent to the mind. But that this is not the caſe, is evident from experience;

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ſometimes the motive, that preſents, prevails, and ſometimes it does not. Again, if motives work irreſiſtibly, then in every inſtance, where *two motives* are preſent to the mind, one exciting to *act*, and another exciting to the *contrary* (which is frequently the caſe) a man muſt be under a neceſſity of *doing* and *avoiding* the *ſame* action, at the *ſame* time, which is plainly impoſſible in the nature of things.

If it ſhould be urged, that as in phyſical cauſes, the *ſtronger* power *prevails*, tho' both work neceſſarily; ſo in this caſe, the ſtronger *motive* prevails, and the weaker would do it, did not the ſtronger *intervene* and *prevent* it; which ſhews that moral and phyſical cauſes work alike *irreſiſtibly*. I *anſwer*, the ſtrength of this objection lies in the *wrong application* of the term *ſtronger*; it being applied to the motive that *prevails*, without any regard to what is ſtronger or weaker, in the nature of things. The ſubjects which fall under the cognizance of the underſtanding are ſuch, as relates either to the *truth*, or to the *fitneſs* of things. With regard to the former, the terms *ſtronger* or *weaker* are only applicable to it, as they figuratively expreſs the *ſufficiency* or *inſufficiency* of thoſe arguments, by which the truth of a propoſition is deſigned to be eſtabliſhed, there being no other way, in which arguments are capable of being compared; and accordingly, an argument is ſaid to be *ſtrong* or *weak*, as it *more* or *leſs* proves or confirms the truth of the propoſition it is brought to prove. And, with regard to the latter, the forementioned terms are applicable to it, only as they figuratively expreſs the *fitneſs* or *unfitneſs* of thoſe actions, which the motives of perſuaſion would excite us to, there being no other way, in which motives are capable of being compar'd; and accordingly a *motive* is ſtrong or weak, as the

the *action* is more or leſs *fit* to be performed which it excites to. And tho', with regard to *phyſical cauſes*, that which is ſtrongeſt always prevails; yet it is otherwiſe with regard to *moral cauſes*. Of theſe ſometimes the *ſtronger*, ſometimes the *weaker* prevails; and the ground of this difference is evident, *namely*, that what we call moral cauſes, ſtrictly ſpeaking, are no cauſes at all; but barely *paſſive reaſons* of, or *excitements* to the action, or to the refraining from acting. Which excitements we have power, or are at liberty to comply with or reject, as I have ſhewed above. And, thus at one time a man chuſes to gratify a natural appetite, tho' he is convinced of the *unfitneſs* of that gratification, and then the *weaker* motives prevails; and at another time, he rejects that excitement, becauſe of its *unfitneſs*, and then the *ſtronger* prevails. Now to ſay, in this caſe, that the motive, ariſing from the man's *appetite*, was ſtrongeſt at one time, and that, ariſing from his *judgment*, was ſtrongeſt at the other; this is to determine the ſtrength weakneſs of a motive from the *event* only, and not from what is ſtronger or weaker in the *nature of things*. And to ſay that the motive *prevailed*, becauſe it was ſtrongeſt, is the ſame as to ſay, that it prevailed, becauſe it *did prevail*; prevailing itſelf being made the *ground* of that diſtinction. To this I may add, that as one argument, in the nature of the thing, is *ſtronger* than another, that is, one does really prove what the other does not; and as our underſtandings do not *conſtitute* that difference, but only judge *right* or *wrong* concerning it; ſo to ſay that a concluſive argument is weak, becauſe it *does not convince*, is prepoſterous; it being evident, that the defect, or weakneſs, is not in the argument, but in the man's *underſtanding*, who is not convinced by it. So, in like manner, one *motive* is, in the nature

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of the thing, ſtronger than another, that is, it is *fitter* to excite to action; and our *wills* do not conſtitute that difference, but only *determine* us to a right or wrong choice. And therefore to ſay, that a motive, which excites to a *right choice*, is weak, becauſe it does not prevail, is alike prepoſterous; it being alike evident, that the *defect* or *weakneſs* is not in the motive, but in our *wills*, which *refuſe* to be influenced or wrought on by it. Again,

If it ſhould be urged, that the *exertion* of the *active faculty* in man in neceſſarily connected with the *laſt judgment*, or *perception* of the *underſtanding*: and as man is allowed to be *paſſive*, with regard to ſuch judgment or perception; ſo conſequently, thoſe actions cannot be free which are *neceſſarily connected* with it. I *anſwer*, the *preception* and the *judgment* of the underſtanding may be conſider'd, either as the *ſame thing*, or elſe as *two different things*: that is to ſay, tho' every act of judging may be truly ſaid to be an act of perception; yet every act of perception is not an act of judging. So that *perception*, when diſtinguiſhed from *judging*, is the *ſeeing things* as they *are* (or as they *appear* to be) with their *circumſtances* and *conſequences*; and *judging* is the ſeeing, or judging of their *fitneſs* or *unfitneſs*, as they ſtand *related* to thoſe circumſtances, *&c.* and, tho' the underſtanding does as *truly perceive* the fitneſs or unfitneſs of things (or what they appear to be) when it judges, as it doth the *things themſelves*, with their *circumſtances*, *&c.* yet theſe are plainly two diſtinct kinds of perception, the one *natural*, the other *moral*, if I may thus diſtinguiſh them. And, tho' we are *paſſive* with regard to theſe perceptions, and cannot ſee things otherwiſe than as they appear to us, whether in a natural or a moral view; and tho' there cannot be ſuch a thing as action, without a *precedent preception*; yet perception and

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action are not *neceſſarily connected.* I ſhall explain this by a familiar example; Two men are in company together; the one offers in words to *give* the other ſome valuable thing, and likewiſe *reacheth* forth his hand to give him that thing; the other, not only perceives the *kind offer* of his friend, and the *thing* thus offered as likewiſe the *valuableneſs* of that thing; but he alſo *perceives*, or *judges*, that it is a thing not fit to be given by his friend, and that it is unfit for him to receive it from him, with regard to each of their *circumſtances.* In this caſe, tho' the thing be perceived, as aforeſaid, and tho' there could be no place for accepting, or refuſing, if there had been no *perception* of the offer; yet that perception is not neceſſarily connected, that is, it is not the *phyſical cauſe* of the action that follows. The man, notwithſtanding theſe preceptions, has *power*, and is at *liberty* covetouſly to *accept*, or generouſly to *refuſe* the gift, which his friend has ſo kindly, but unfitly offered him. There being not any thing more clear and evident, from experience, than this, *namely*, that one man covetouſly prefers the *leſſer good* of himſelf to the *greater good* of another, or to the *good* of the *publick*, when he ſees that theſe come in competition; and another man generouſly preſers the *greater good* of another, or the *good* of the *publick*, to the *leſſer good* of himſelf, when thoſe come in competition; which could not poſſibly be, if perception and action were *neceſſarily connected*, as aforeſaid. For if that were the caſe, then all men would be *generous* or *ſelfiſh* alike, as their underſtandings inform them of the conſequences of their actions, with regard to the good or evil of themſelves or others; the ſame *cauſe* would produce the ſame *effect*; the ſame *perception* muſt neceſſarily produce the ſame *action* in *every ſubject.* But ſurely the contrary to this is evident

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in fact. Beſides, That perception and action are not *neceſſarily connected*, as aforeſaid, is farther evident from hence; a man in a dream has a real perception, not only of the *excitements* to action, but of *action itſelf*, even whilſt the *active power* is at *reſt*. And thus, a man has a real perception of his *eating* and *drinking*, *walking* and *talking*, and the like; and yet none of the *motions* of the body take place, by which thoſe *complex actions* are performed. And from hence I argue, if the real perception of the excitements to action, and of the actions themſelves which they excite to, be not ſufficient to produce real action, which is the preſent caſe, then it will unavoidably follow, that action is not *neceſſarily connected* with perception, but is produced by ſome other cauſe. It is true, action does *ſometimes* follow or accompany ſuch perception; men ſometimes talk and walk, and perform other actions in their dreams; but this is *ſeldom*. Whereas if action were neceſſarily connected with perception, this would *always* be the caſe. And tho' the perceptive faculty is *deluded*, the objects of perception being fictitious, and not real; yet that cannot alter the caſe, with regard to the *phyſical influence* of ſuch perception; ſeeing the perception itſelf is real, whether the objects of it are ſo, or not. A man has as real a perception, and is as much convinced at the time, that he eats and drinks when he is aſleep, as when he performs thoſe actions when awake; only they ariſe from, and are produced by *different cauſes*. In *fine*, perception and action are the effects of two cauſes, which have no more connection than *activeneſs* and *paſſiveneſs*. If I paſs along the ſtreet, and a *miſerable object* be preſented to my view, my perception is *neceſſary*; the idea of that object being raiſed in my mind, independent of my will; and if I am conſcious that I have power to deliver the aforeſaid object from the miſery it labours un-

der, and if I judge that it is right and fit I ſhould do ſo; I am, with regard to theſe perceptions, ſo far *paſſive*, as that, if I *attend* to the ſubject, I cannot think otherwiſe of it than I do. But if I miniſter that relief, this muſt be done by a *power*, in the exerciſe of which I am not *paſſive* but *active*: I muſt give ſuch *motions* to my body, as are neceſſary to produce that effect, when I am at liberty either to *exert* the active faculty, or to be at reſt. And if ſuch motion does take place, it is not the perception of the *miſerable object*, nor of my *ability* to relieve, nor of the *fitneſs* of that relief, nor yet the perception of *relieving* itſelf, which is the *phyſical cauſe* of that motion; all theſe perceptions may take place in a dream, and yet no motion follow; motion being performed by a power, which is as diſtinct from the power of perception, as perception is from action.

If it ſhould be farther urged, allowing that perception and action are not neceſſarily connected; yet ſeeing every man always does what appears to him to be *beſt at the time*, therefore *liberty* and *neceſſity*, in the iſſue, amount to the *ſame thing*. Before I return an anſwer to this objection, I find it proper to obſerve, that the term *beſt* is comparative. For when ſeveral things or actions come in competition, as to their goodneſs, fitneſs, and the like, and the underſtanding has taken a view of them in theſe reſpects, then it judges *that* particular thing or action to be *beſt*, which, upon ſuch enquiry, appears to have the *preference* in that particular wherein the compariſon is made. So that, to do always what appears to be *beſt*, *at the time*, is to act always upon a *judgment* form'd, as aforeſaid. This being premiſed,

I anſwer, *firſt*, man is ſo far from following his judgment in all caſes, that on the contrary, he ſometimes *acts without it*, and ſometimes *acts againſt it*, as is abundantly evident from experience. By acting without judgment, I do not

mean that a man *acts without thinking*; but this I mean, that he acts without entering into the *queſtion*, whether the action be good or evil, fit or unfit. He drinks to gratify a natural inclination, without examining, whether it is *beſt* to *gratify* that inclination, or to *deny* it. And as we *ſometimes* act without judgment, ſo ſad experience ſhews, that we *ſometimes* act againſt it. A man who is thoroughly convinced, from experience, that *drinking* to *exceſs* will draw upon him ſuch illneſs, as is ten times more than equivalent to the pleaſure he takes in that indulgence; he will, notwithſtanding that *conviction*, drink to exceſs, even tho' his conviction of the *ſad conſequence* of that exceſs be urged to him as a *reaſon* againſt it. And not only in this, but alſo in many other caſes, our appetites and paſſions lead us to act not only *without*, but *againſt our judgment*. And, tho' full conviction of the unfitneſs of an action is, in the nature of the thing, a proper *motive* or *reaſon* againſt ſuch action; yet it does not *always prevail*. The underſtanding may interpoſe, and urge even *mathematical demonſtration*, in order to *engage* to action, or to *refrain* from it: and yet, alas, theſe *bonds* of full conviction are *too weak* to hold men with. Theſe ropes are *ſometimes* broken in ſunder like a thread, when *paſſion* or *appetite* interpoſes, and whilſt the *Samſon*'s *lock* of *liberty* remains. Again,

I anſwer, *ſecondly*, ſuppoſing man did always act from a conviction of the fitneſs of the action, yet this would not *affect* his *liberty*; becauſe his faculties are exerciſed in the *ſame way*, and with the *ſame freedom* when he *follows his judgment*, as when he acts *againſt it*. That is, the fitneſs of the action is no more than a *motive*, or the *ground*, or *reaſon* of acting in one caſe; as the motives which ariſe from appetite, paſſion, or any other part of our

compoſition, *are* in any other caſe. And therefore, to ſay that *liberty* and *neceſſity*, in the iſſue, amount to the *ſame thing*, is the ſame as to ſay, that *two different* and *contrary* ideas, in the iſſue, amount to the *ſame idea*; which, ſurely, is moſt *abſurd* and *contradictory*, and introduces the utmoſt confuſion.

If it ſhould be farther urged, that by being *beſt at the time*, as in the objection above, is not meant what at the time is judged beſt upon the whole, but only what will then give the greateſt preſent pleaſure: I anſwer, that every act of ſelf-denial is a manifeſt proof of the contrary, in which men forego what to them appears the greateſt preſent pleaſure; either to ward off ſome greater future evil from themſelves, or others, or elſe to procure ſome greater future good. Upon the whole, I think I may venture to ſay, that tho' God is the *author of nature*, and conſequently of all the parts of that compoſition, from whence the *motives* to action ariſe; yet he cannot *fairly* be charged with the *actions themſelves*, which thoſe motives are the *ground* or *reaſon* of; ſeeing he has left the *direction* of this well compoſed ſyſtem (*viz.* the *human compoſition*) to be the ſubject of every man's *free choice*. Again,

If it ſhould be urged, that it is allowed, on all hands, to be *impoſſible* for God to act contrary to his *moral perfections*; and if ſo, then his actions muſt be neceſſary; and if God's actions are neceſſary, then ours *may* be ſo. I *anſwer*, the ſtrength of this objection lies in the *improper* uſe of the word *impoſſible*; which, in this caſe, is figuratively uſed to expreſs *the prevailing influence* of thoſe motives of perſuaſion, which we know will as effectually *prevent*, as any phyſical impoſſibility. And thus we ſay, it is morally impoſſible for God to *do evil*; by which is meant, that the moral

moral unfitneſs of ſuch a conduct affords a *motive*, which, by its perſuaſive influence, will as effectually *prevent God* from doing evil, as any phyſical impoſſibility, that is, as any impoſſibility ariſing from *phyſical impediments* can do. So that the *ground* of this knowledge, *viz.* that God will not do evil, does not ariſe from our knowing that he wants either power or liberty to do evil, or that the forementioned *motive* will always *neceſſarily prevent* every intelligent being from acting thus, and thereby that it is ſtrictly impoſſible; but it ariſes from hence, that, as in the nature of the thing, no action can take place, without ſome motive to excite it, and as the doing evil is morally unfit; ſo that unfitneſs will prevent every intelligent being from doing evil in all thoſe caſes in which there is not any thing in the compoſition of that being, which affords an *excitement* or *temptation* to it; which is the caſe with reſpect to *God*. And this moral reſtraint we *commonly*, tho' improperly or figuratively, call *moral impoſſibility*. Again,

If it ſhould be urged, That *God foreknows* all the actions of men, and conſequently, that thoſe actions are not free, *preſcience* and *liberty* being inconſiſtent: I *anſwer*, that this objection is built upon a two-fold preſumption, *viz. firſt*, that *God does foreknow* all the actions of men. *Secondly*, that preſcience and liberty are *inconſiſtent*.

If it ſhould be ſaid of the *firſt* of theſe, that it is ſuppoſed in God's *natural* character, as he is poſſeſſed of *all perfection*: I *anſwer*, if the actions of voluntary agents are *not foreknowable, in the nature of things*, then preſcience is not ſuppoſed in God's natural character; becauſe it cannot be an *imperfection* in God for him not to foreknow, what is *not knowable in nature*. And if they are foreknowable, in the nature of things, then the divine preſcience is no objection againſt liberty.

If it ſhould be farther urged, that as the *excitements* to action ariſe from the ſeveral parts of our *compoſition*, and as God perfectly foreknows the *meaſure* of men's *underſtandings*, their *diſpoſition*, *temper* and *frame*, theſe being the *reſult* of that compoſition, and the circumſtances that attend it; ſo he foreknows what *motives* will ſute all tempers and diſpoſitions, as likewiſe when each motive will *preſent*; and from hence he foreknows, or rightly judges, what *influence* they will have upon the will, and conſequently he foreknows the action itſelf.

I anſwer, *firſt*, if there were ſuch an connection betwixt the excitements to action, and action itſelf, ſo as that one did *neceſſarily* follow the other, then I grant, that as this might be a proper foundation for preſcience, ſo it would be deſtructive of liberty. But this is by no means the caſe; the excitements to action, and the will, having no neceſſary connection at all, as I have ſhewn above. And, to ſay, that God foreknows what motives will *ſute* all tempers and diſpoſitions, is no more than to ſay, that he foreknows what will be motives, or excitements to action, to perſons of all tempers and diſpoſitions; but this, I think, cannot, in the nature of the thing, be a foundation for *foreknowing abſolutely* how a man will determine from ſuch motives, ſeeing the volition of his will is not neceſſarily connected with them. Again,

I anſwer, *ſecondly*, that, which is here made the ground of preſcience, is in reality *preſcience itſelf*. For as the meaſure of the underſtanding, the diſpoſition, temper, and frame of particular perſons, and of the ſame perſon at different times, are the reſult of the human compoſition, together with a variety of circumſtances that concur; ſo theſe circumſtances, as likewiſe that which gives occaſion

ſion for the excitements to action, are partly the product of *phyſical cauſes*, partly *accidental*, not depending (for any thing that appears) upon the underſtanding, diſpoſition, temper, or frame of any intelligent being whatever; and partly ſuch as ariſe from our having to do with other *agents* like our-ſelves; the knowledge of all which plainly *includes preſcience*, and therefore cannot be the ground or reaſon of it.

If it ſhould be ſaid of the *ſecond* point preſumed in the objection (*viz.* the *inconſiſtency* of preſcience with liberty) that it is capable of being demonſtrated thus. All effects depend upon their cauſes; and, therefore, in order *abſolutely* to *foreknow* the *effect*, it is abſolutely neceſſary to *know* the *cauſe*. And as actions are cauſed by the volition of the will; ſo that volition muſt be *known*, or elſe the action cannot be *foreknown*, which is the effect of it. Again, the volition of the will is the *effect* of ſome precedent cauſe, or elſe it is the *firſt mover*. If it is the effect of a precedent cauſe, then as that cauſe muſt be known in order to foreknow its effect; ſo conſequently man is not free, becauſe the volition of his will is *determined* by that cauſe. But if the will is the firſt mover, then its volition cannot be foreknowable, in the nature of things; becauſe there is not the *knowledge* of any *precedent cauſe* to diſcover it by.

I *anſwer*, tho' the effects of phyſical cauſes cannot be *abſolutely* foreknown, without the knowledge of their cauſes, or unleſs that knowledge be communicated from thoſe who know thoſe cauſes and thoſe cauſes cannot be foreknown, without the knowledge of their cauſes, and ſo on; yet, I think, this does not *conclude* againſt the *foreknowledge* of the volition of the will in *all caſes*, even tho' that volition has no precedent cauſe to diſco-

ver it by. For, tho' the will is the *firſt mover* and conſequently its volition has no cauſe external to, or without itſelf; yet that volition cannot take place, without ſome *previous reaſon* or *motive* to induce to it. And, therefore, if an excitement to action takes place, and that excitement is foreknowable in the nature of things; and if it is likewiſe foreknowable that no other excitement can poſſibly take place to influence in the choice; then that excitement will be the ground or reaſon of the volition of the will, and conſequently ſuch volition is foreknowable, in the nature of things. And thus it holds good, in the negative, as we foreknow that God will *not do evil*, inaſmuch as we know that there cannot poſſibly take place any reaſon or motive to induce him to it. And thus far we foreknow that God *will do good*, inaſmuch as we know, that the doing good is truly valuable in itſelf, and, as ſuch, is a motive proper and ſufficient to influence the divine will, and conſequently to excite him to action, whenever the nature and circumſtances of the caſe render it fit and proper that he ſhould do ſo. And, if we could *foreſee* ſuch a caſe, in which it would be morally fit for God to act thus, or thus then we ſhould have an *equal certainty* of the event, *before*, as after the action. And tho' the event would be certain, antecedently to the action, yet the divine action would not be neceſſary, but *free*: that is, in ſuch a caſe, God would not be moved or determined to act from any natural or phyſical neceſſity; but he would be *perſwaded* to it, if I may thus ſpeak, from a *moral motive*; which motive is not a power, or phyſical cauſe, but barely a paſſive reaſon of the action. And therefore to ſay, that *certainty of the event* makes the *action neceſſary*, this appears plainly to be a miſtake, becauſe certainty, in the preſent caſe,

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does not ariſe from any natural neceſſity God is under to act, but from the *knowledge* of the *fitneſs* of the action; which fitneſs, as it will be (not the phyſical cauſe, but) the *ground* or *reaſon* of acting to God; ſo the knowledge of that fitneſs will be the ground of *preſcience*, and conſequently of *certainty* of the event, with reſpect to us. But with regard to men, who have *different motives* ariſing from their compoſition, one exciting to act, and another exciting to the contrary; this I allow very much alters the caſe, and renders the foreknowledge of the volition of the will, in ſuch caſes, more *difficult* to be *accounted for*; tho', I think, it is not a *proof* of the contrary. And therefore, abſolutely to determine that preſcience and human liberty are, or that they are not conſiſtent; this, I think, is preſuming, and is void of proof.

As to the term *contingent*, which is ſometimes made uſe of in this caſe, if it be applied only to thoſe *precarious circumſtances* of human actions, which take place not only without, but ſometimes contrary to the will and intention of the agent, and ſo are perfectly accidental; then, I think, that there is not any thing in nature, which can be a *foundation* for *preſcience*, with regard to ſuch caſual circumſtances. And, I take it, the caſe is the ſame with regard to all thoſe actions which are occaſioned by them. For if there is not any foundation for foreknowing the *accidental circumſtances* of human actions, then there can be no *foundation* for *foreknowing* thoſe actions, which depend upon ſuch circumſtances, as the *ground* and *reaſon* of them. As thus, a man throws a ſtone with an intent to hit a dog, but miſſing the dog, he hits a man paſſing by. In this caſe as the circumſtance of the action, *viz. hitting the man*, was not only without, but contrary to the will

will and intention of the agent, and therefore was perfectly accidental; ſo, I think, that there is not any thing in nature which can be a *foundation* for *preſcience*, with reſpect to this precarious circumſtance. And, if ſo, then whatever actions *follow*, or are *occaſioned* by it, theſe muſt ſtand upon the ſame foot, with regard to preſcience, as the *circumſtance* of the *action* does, which either mediately or immediately is the ground or reaſon of them. But this, I think, does not affect the caſe, as to the *inconſiſtency* of preſcience with human liberty. Upon the whole, my anſwer to the objection is this. I have already proved that man is free, by ſhewing that the motives which excite him to act, or to refrain from acting, influence *perſuaſively*, and not neceſſarily; which perſuaſive influence every man has power, or is at liberty to *comply* with, or *reject*; and conſequently, either there is no preſcience, or elſe preſcience and human liberty are conſiſtent; but which of theſe is the caſe, as it is not eaſy to determine, ſo it is beſide the preſent argument. Again,

If it ſhould be urged, tho' we are at liberty to act from what motive we pleaſe, and tho' motive is not an active or phyſical cauſe, but only a paſſive reaſon of acting, or of refuſing to act; yet as we are not *arbitrary* with regard to what ſhall pleaſe, but are determined *independant* of our will; ſo conſequently we are not free, or, in other words *virtue* and *vice* are not the ſubjects of our free choice.

I anſwer, *firſt*, if the freedom of an agent conſiſts in his having power and being at liberty to conſtitute a *difference* in things, that is, *arbitrarily to determine* what ſhall be good or evil, right or wrong; and conſequently, what ſhall be pleaſing or diſpleaſing, then it muſt be granted, that there neither

neither is nor can be any ſuch thing as liberty, becauſe theſe ariſe from, and are founded in the nature of things, independent of any ſuch determination. Beſides, the *ſuppoſition* of ſuch a power carries in it an abſurdity; for as right and wrong, good and evil, neceſſarily ſuppoſe a *natural difference* in things (take away that difference, and there can be no ſuch diſtinctions, *crooked* and *ſtraight* cannot take place without a difference in nature) ſo without that difference, there cannot be a foundation for being *pleaſed* with one thing, and *diſpleaſed* with another, but all things muſt pleaſe or diſpleaſe alike. And, therefore, to ſuppoſe a power to make a difference in things, when there is none in nature, is to ſuppoſe that things can differ, while they are alike, which is a contradiction. But farther,

I anſwer, *ſecondly*, that the liberty here contended for, as the foundation of *virtue* and *vice*, does not ariſe from a power or liberty to conſtitute a difference in things, but it ariſes from a power or freedom to act *agreeably* with, or *contrary* to the *moral fitneſs* of things, ſuppoſing ſuch a difference in nature. And, for the clearing of this point I obſerve, that virtue or goodneſs, ſtrictly and properly ſo called, conſiſts in *communicating happineſs* to the *ſuitable* ſubjects of it, or in the endeavouring to do it, by doing and avoiding what appears to be proper for the attainment of that end; and that vice, or moral evil, conſiſts in *communicating unhappineſs* to the *improper* ſubjects of it, or in contributing either negatively or poſitively to that unhappineſs. Again, I farther obſerve, that as man is a *compound being*, ſo this renders him capable of ſeveral diſtinct kinds of pleaſure, which in other words we call happineſs, and the capacity he has, for taſting thoſe pleaſures, renders him capable of

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their contraries, as I have before ſhewn. He is hereby alſo qualified for *ſociety*, that is, for the *giving* and *receiving* pleaſure to, and from others of his kind; and this likewiſe renders him capable of giving and receiving the contrary. And as the appetites and paſſions, which in part conſtitute human nature, diſpoſe men to procure the comforts, and guard againſt the evils of life, both for themſelves and others; ſo they are capable of being *vitiated*, that is, of being indulged to an exceſs, and thereby of diſpoſing men contrarily to what they were deſigned, and what the moral fitneſs of things requires. Man is alſo endowed with a faculty of *underſtanding*, which renders him capable of diſcerning the moral difference in things, and thereby of knowing that it is right and fit, in the nature of things, that all others ſhould be happy as well as himſelf; and conſequently, that it is right and fit that he ſhould proſecute the happineſs not only of himſelf, but of all others as far as it is in his power, and is conſiſtent with his own; yea, that he ſhould *deny himſelf*, when his own and the common felicity come in *competition*.

Man being thus conſtituted, he is hereby qualified to render himſelf a *generous* or a *ſelfiſh* creature, that is, he is qualified to direct his inclinations and endeavours towards the attaining his own pleaſure, in *conjunction* with, and in *ſubordination* to the common happineſs, or to direct theſe in diſtinction from, and in oppoſition to the *common felicity*; and, in the *free exerciſe* of this power, he becomes either virtuous or vicious. For, tho' every man will be diſpoſed, from the nature of the thing, to *prefer* happineſs to miſery; and tho' every man's *particular conſtitution* may incline him to prefer one kind of pleaſure to another, which, I think, is all that can be urged

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in the preſent caſe; yet no man is hereby *determined* to be generous or ſelfiſh. A generous man prefers the common felicity to his own, and a ſelfiſh man prefers his own to the publick; a generous man prefers one kind of pleaſure to another, but *denies himſelf* in both, when his own, and the common happineſs, come in competition; a ſelfiſh man likewiſe prefers one kind of pleaſure to another, and he *indulges himſelf* in both, tho' they are inconſiſtent with, and deſtructive of the common good. And the ground of this difference, *viz.* that one man is generous or virtuous, and another man is ſelfiſh or vicious, does not ariſe from the natural difference in things; for then all men would be virtuous or vicious alike; nor yet from an inclination, ariſing from every man's particular conſtitution, to prefer one kind of pleaſure to another, that being equally the caſe both of virtuous and vicious men; but it ariſes plainly from that *power*, or *liberty*, which takes place in every man, to *direct* or *reſtrain* his inclinations and endeavours, either one way or the other.

If it ſhould be farther urged, allowing that virtue and vice are the ſubjects of mens free choice, as the term *free* is oppoſed to *neceſſity*; yet they are not free with regard to every thing which may *influence* or *biaſs* them in that choice; ſeeing their natural conſtitution very *ſtrongly diſpoſes* them to vice; by which means, vice has much the advantage of virtue, and it is great odds but men will be vicious, they being ſo ſtrongly inclined, by their *natural* appetites and affections to chuſe it rather than virtue. To this it may be anſwered, men are generally too haſty in their *cenſures* of *nature*. That we have appetites and affections is beyond diſpute; but that theſe, as they are of nature's providing, *diſpoſe* and *incline* us to vice, will be denied; yea, our natu-

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ral conſtitution, upon the *whole*, is ſo far from diſpoſing us to vice, that on the contrary it is an excitement to virtue. Man is a compound creature who is fitly conſtituted to anſwer the purpoſes of *ſocial felicity*; his appetites and paſſions diſpoſe him to *promote* and *ſecure* the publick good; his underſtanding qualifies him to *diſcern* betwixt right and wrong, good and evil; and conſequently, to judge of the *fitneſs* or *unfitneſs* of his actions, with relation to that end. And he is endowed with *power*, to guide his behaviour as his *judgment* ſhall direct; and when the harmony of this compoſition is preſerved, then man is an *agreeable* and *uſeful*, or, in other words, a virtuous creature. It is true, man is capable of being the contrary; all his appetites and paſſions are capable of being *vitiated*, that is, of being indulged beyond their due bounds; by which indulgence, the *harmony* of that compoſition is diſturbed, evil is *introduced*, and man becomes, in *many* inſtances, a *diſagreeable* and *hurtful*, or, in other words, a vicious creature. But then, it ought to be remembered, that his conduct, upon the whole, is *unnatural*, ſeeing his compoſition *taken together* diſpoſes him to the contrary. This, I imagine, will appear more plainly to be the caſe, when I have examin'd two or three branches of human affection, which are the *chief occaſions* of evil.

Self-love (which unhappily proves introductive to much vice) was rightly planted in human nature, by the great Author of our being, to diſpoſe us to do all that is neceſſary for our ſupport and preſervation, and to guard againſt every danger, to which we are expoſed. But then there are other paſſions planted in us, *viz. ſympathy*, *pity*, and *compaſſion*, which diſpoſe us to enter into the concerns of our *fellow-creatures*, and to

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do what is neceſſary to make them happy. And, as theſe different affections were deſigned for a *balance* to, and a *conſtant check* upon each other; and as the directing each, and every of theſe to their *proper* objects, and keeping them within *due bounds*, not indulging one to the depreſſing of another, is properly our *natural ſtate*; and as *reaſon* joins iſſue, and ſhews us that it is as fit, in the nature of things, that all others ſhould be happy, as that we ſhould be ſo, and thereby convinces us of the *fitneſs* of our endeavours in proſecuting the happineſs of others, as well as our own; ſo this ſhews plainly, that our compoſition, taken together, is ſo far from *inclining* us to *vice*, that on the contrary it *diſpoſes* us to *virtue*; and that, when ſelf-love becomes the *occaſion* of *evil*, it is not by our following nature, but by perverting it.

Thus again, the affectionate concern we have for the happineſs and welfare of our *children* and *kindred* (a paſſion which poſſibly occaſions more vice in the world than any other branch of our compoſition) was rightly and wiſely planted in human nature, to point out to us who they are, upon whom we are *firſt* to exerciſe our *care* and *kindneſs*. For as our power of doing good is limitted, by which means we are uncapable of ſerving all who need aſſiſtance from others; ſo this affection points out to us thoſe, who, of all others, are the *immediate* objects of our regard. We are to love, and take care of ſuch relatives, in *diſtinction* from, but not in *oppoſition* to the reſt of our *fellow-creatures*; who need our help, and who have, or would have, an equal *right* to our aſſiſtance, if we had equal power of helping all, as we have of aſſiſting thoſe, who are providentially made our immediate dependents. So that when love to our off-ſpring, and relations, is *moderated* and kept within *due bounds*, then it leads to virtue, that is,

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to the promoting the common happineſs; but when this affection is ſo *indulged*, as that it depreſſes our *pity* and *compaſſion* to the reſt of our fellow-creatures, and thereby *prevents* us from doing that good to others, which their neceſſity calls for, and our ability enables us to do; in theſe caſes, the affection is vitiated, and becomes the *occaſion* of much evil. But then it ought to be remembered, that this evil is not *juſtly chargeable* upon nature, but upon its perverſion and abuſe.

The like may be ſaid, with regard to *love* to our *country*. All that *devaſtation* and *miſery*, which has been, at any time, introduced by this branch of human affection, did not ſpring from the natural uſe, but from the perverſion and abuſe of it. When love to our country is moderated, and kept within due bounds, that is, when it diſpoſes us to guard againſt all approaches to *arbitrary power*, and every thing by which the *commonwealth* is in danger of ſuffering; and when we love, and do good to our country, in *diſtinction* from, but not in *oppoſition* to other *countries*, which would have an equal *right* to our regard, if we had equal power of helping all, as we have of aſſiſting our own, then love to our country is a *virtue*. But if we indulge the paſſion beyond its due bounds, and love our country in *oppoſition* to other countries, ſo as to do them *hurt* and *damage*, in order to promote the *intereſt*, and raiſe the *glory* of our own; or if we neglect other countries, when it is in our power to ſerve our own, and them alſo; in theſe caſes, the proper uſe of the affection is *perverted*, and love to our country is *evil* and *vicious*; there being as much reaſon, that thoſe people ſhould be happy who live upon any other part of the globe, as that they ſhould be ſo, who live upon the ſame ſpot of earth with us.

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As far as the *old Romans* love to their country was rightly directed and applied as above; ſo far it was *virtuous*, and worthy of our *praiſe* and *imitation*. But, if love to their country led them, at any time, to *impoveriſh*, *inſlave*, or *lay waſte* other *countries*, in order to promote the *intereſt*, or raiſe the *grandeur* of their own; or if it *prevented* them from helping other countries, when it was in their power to ſerve their own, and them alſo; ſo far love to their country was *vicious*, and worthy of our *higheſt contempt*.

The caſe is the ſame, with regard to all the *appetites* and *affections* planted in human nature. Theſe were rightly and wiſely placed in us, by the great Author of our being, for the propagation of our ſpecies, for the preſervation of ourſelves and others, and for the ſerving ſuch other purpoſes as are neceſſary to promote and ſecure the common happineſs. And when any of theſe become the occaſion of vice, or moral evil, it ariſes not from the natural uſe, but from the perverſion and abuſe of them. From what I have obſerved, I think, it plainly appears, that *nature*, and conſequently that the *God* of *nature*, is not juſtly chargeable with that *moral evil*, which is occaſioned by the appetites and paſſions which take place in, and in part conſtitute human nature. It is true, God might, if he pleaſed, have prevented this kind of evil; but then he would have prevented himſelf from making ſuch creatures as we are, and from beſtowing on us thoſe excellent and valuable gifts, by which we are rendered capable of making ourſelves the ſuitable and proper objects of his approbation and affection; and of receiving from him ſuch farther favours as his wiſdom and goodneſs may diſpoſe him to beſtow upon us. In *fine*, I think, I may venture to ſay, that the *evil* which takes place in the world, whe-

ther natural or moral, will not afford an argument *againſt*, or in *prejudice* of the grand point I have been defending; *namely*, that God is in reality a *wiſe*, and a *good* Being, &c.

Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to vindicate God's *moral character*, as to the *cauſe* and *origin* of evil; the point which you ſay your doubt has ariſen from. And tho' I may not have entered into every queſtion, which ſo *nice* and ſo *general* a ſubject may be liable to; yet, I think, I have laid down ſuch *principles*, from whence the true anſwer to thoſe queſtions may be gathered. I leave it to your conſideration, wiſhing that it may give you ſatisfaction; and proceed,

Thirdly, and *laſtly*, To improve the whole to ſerve the purpoſes of *virtue* and *true goodneſs*, by repreſenting to my reader, what it is, which will render him truly *lovely* and *valuable* in himſelf, and truly *acceptable* and *well-pleaſing* to God. And,

Firſt, I am to repreſent to my reader, what it is which will render him truly lovely and valuable in himſelf; or what it is which conſtitutes a *good* and *virtuous character*. Man (as I have already obſerved) is a creature excellently conſtituted, to anſwer all the purpoſes of *ſocial felicity*, and to promote and carry on a *common happineſs*. All his appetites and affections, when rightly directed, and kept in due bounds, lead to this end; his underſtanding likewiſe ſhews him the fitneſs of a common good, and the intrinſick excellency and valuableneſs of purſuing it. So that, when the *harmony* of this compoſition is perſerved, that is, when each appetite and paſſion is kept in due bounds; one not indulged to the depreſſing of another, and all, by the direction of the underſtanding, made ſubſervient to the *common good*; then it is, that he is an *agreeable*, and *uſeful*, or, in other words, a *virtuous* and a *lovely creature*.

I ſay,

I ſay, when a man has a true concern, and a hearty endeavour to promote the happineſs and well-being of the reſt of his fellow-creatures, and, in conſequence of which, he renders himſelf both agreeable and uſeful to all around him, and introduces as much *happineſs* into the creation as he can; then it is that he anſwers the character of a *good* and *virtuous* man. That which makes God to be a *good Being* is his doing good for *goodneſs ſake*, his exerciſing his natural properties to ſerve the purpoſes of *benevolence*; his calling a multitude of creatures into being, on purpoſe to communicate *happineſs* to them; and his wiſe and kind proviſion of all things neceſſary to make them ſo; this is what renders *God* truly lovely and valuable. As for his boundleſs power and knowledge, his immenſity, eternity, and the like; tho' theſe may lay a foundation for *admiration* and *reverence*, yet theſe alone do not render him an *agreeable* object. But when all his natural properties are influenced and directed by his wiſdom and goodneſs, this is what renders him *altogether lovely*, and the *perfection* of *beauty*. And, as this is what makes God truly valuable; ſo it is this, and this only, which can make *men* ſo. When they are animated by ſuch a ſpirit and principle of *true goodneſs*, as diſpoſes them to ſtudy and proſecute the happineſs of their fellow-creatures, as far as it is in their power, by removing every *uneaſineſs*, and every *impediment* to their comfort and felicity; and by giving all that kind *aſſiſtance* and *protection*, which is neceſſary to make life pleaſant and delightful; when they render themſelves both *agreeable* and *uſeful* to their relations, ſervants, neighbours, and to all thoſe among whom they live, or who are any-ways capable of their help, then they anſwer that noble character of being *good* and *virtuous*, and are more or leſs ſo, as

they more or leſs deſire and endeavour after the happineſs and well-being of others.

Men are very apt to *deceive* themſelves, and too often *impoſe* upon others, by making that the *ground* of this valuable character, which does not, in the nature of the thing, entitle them to it. Thus, ſome men think that *ſevere mortifications*, and *denying themſelves* thoſe things which God hath kindly provided for our enjoyment, denominate a man to be good and virtuous. Others value themſelves for the *orthodoxy* of their opinions, their *zeal* for this or that ſcheme of religion; their being engaged in this or that *party*; their diligence in *propagating* what they eſteem truth, and their patience and conſtancy in *ſuffering* for it. Others think that *conſtancy* and *ſeriouſneſs* in reading and hearing the word of God, attending upon *divine ordinances*, and the like, are what conſtitute a good and virtuous character; whereas all theſe may take place in the ſame perſon, and yet he may not have any thing of virtue or goodneſs in him; becauſe, notwithſtanding theſe, he may be deſtitute of what is truly valuable, *viz.* that temper and behaviour, before-mentioned. Yea, a man may abound in theſe, and yet be exceedingly vicious, by his *monopolizing* the bleſſings and comforts of life to himſelf, and by his contributing much to the miſery and unhappineſs of others. But, that which men are in the greateſt danger of being deceived by, in this caſe, is, when they are *ſober* and *temperate* in their enjoyments, *quiet* and *peaceable* among their neighbours, *true* and *faithful* in their covenants and promiſes, ſtrictly *juſt* in anſwering every legal demand, and the like; theſe are eſteemed great virtues, whereas in reality they are not ſo; a man may have all theſe, and yet not be a good man; becauſe he may want

want the ſpirit, and practice of true goodneſs, which is *eſſential* to a good and virtuous character. The former conſtitutes but a *negative* character, *viz.* not an evil man, that is, the man in whom the abovementioned qualities reſide, may be ſaid *not to do evil.* But, alas! there is a wide difference betwixt not doing evil and *doing good*; the latter being a *poſitive character* which can ariſe from nothing leſs, than the love and practice of *virtue* and *true goodneſs*, as above deſcribed. St. *Paul*'s remark is very much to my preſent purpoſe, *Rom.* v. 7. he ſaith, *Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die.* The Apoſtle here diſtinguiſhes betwixt a *righteous man*, and a *good man*; and he obſerves, with regard to the former, who by his juſt behaviour, in anſwering every legal demand, had entitled himſelf to the character of a *righteous man*, for *ſuch a man* one would ſcarce die; his life had nothing valuable in it, to render it *worthy* of ſuch a ranſom; for tho' he did no evil, yet as he did no good, he was but a cypher in the creation. But then the Apoſtle obſerves, with regard to the latter, who by his doing good to all around him, and who by communicating his kind aſſiſtance and protection to all that ſtood in need of his help, had entitled himſelf to the character of a *good man*; that tho' life is exceeding dear to every man, yet for *ſuch a one*, ſome would even dare to die. His life was of ſuch conſequence to the good and happineſs of mankind, that ſome would even venture to *ranſom* it with the *loſs* of their own. Would we then be valuable creatures? and would we deſerve the character of good men? let us put on the ſpirit of virtue and true goodneſs, and that will moſt certainly entitle us to it. But to proceed,

Secondly, I am to repreſent to my reader, what it is which conſtitutes *true religion*, or what it is he muſt be and do to render himſelf truly acceptable and well-pleaſing to God. And here, I think, I have no great difficulty upon my hands; becauſe this is what lies open to the view of every man. We need not run from ſect to ſect, nor from one religious teacher to another; we need not ranſack hiſtory, nor be at the tedious ſearch of examining all the evidence which every miſſionary offers, to prove his meſſage to be divine; nor turn over all the numberleſs volumes which have been written by each religious party, to prove or explain what they call the word of God. No, *the word* (to ſpeak in the language of St. *Paul*) *is nigh us, even in our mouth, and in our heart*. It is but to exerciſe that *reaſoning* capacity which is lodged in the boſom of every man; and this will enable us to diſcover, with *eaſe* and *certainty*, what we muſt be and do to pleaſe God. If I was to ſerve a maſter, whom I knew to be of a covetous temper of mind, who made his *worldly intereſt* the rule and meaſure of his actions, in ſuch a caſe, I ſhould not need a teacher to inform me what I muſt do to pleaſe him; this the nature of the thing would eaſily diſcover. If I could bend my mind to his avaritious temper, and could lay out myſelf in proſecuting his worldly intereſt to the utmoſt of my power, then I might know that my ſervice would be acceptable to him. In like manner, when we know that God is in reality a *wiſe* and *good Being*, &c. then we cannot be at a loſs to know what we muſt be and do to pleaſe him. The nature of the thing ſhews us plainly, that if we have the *ſame temper of mind*, and govern our actions by the *ſame rule* as God does, then we ſhall not fail of his favour; it being morally impoſſible, that it ſhould be otherwiſe.

otherwiſe. Heaven and earth may fail and paſs away, but God will not fail of *loving* and *approving* ſuch creatures, and of *diſapproving* their contraries. Would we then propoſe the queſtion, *viz.* wherein conſiſts true religion? and would we ſeek for ſatisfaction in a way in which we might be certain not to miſtake? Let us take a view of our Creator, when conſider'd in his *moral* capacity, and let us turn our thoughts upon ourſelves, and examine what ſort of creatures we are, how we are *conſtituted* and *circumſtanced*, and how we ſtand naturally *related* to God, and to our fellow-creatures; and then we may diſcover, with eaſe and certainty, what it is which God expects from us, and which will make us approveable in his ſight.

Are we derived dependent beings, endowed with a reaſoning capacity to *direct* and *guide* our behaviour, owing ourſelves, and all that we are or have, to that beſt of beings, who is our *Creator*, and *original benefactor?* this we cannot but know, if we exerciſe our reaſoning capacity; and then we cannot but know likewiſe, that it is *meet*, *right*, and our *bounden duty*, upon all proper occaſions, to awaken in ourſelves, and ſtir up in others, a due and a ſuitable ſenſe of our Creator, of his kind intentions towards us, and of the many favours we have received at his hand, and with a ſincere affection offer up to him our humble and thankful acknowledgments. Again, are we ſocial creatures, endowed with a reaſoning capacity, whom nature hath fitted to give and receive all that *kind aſſiſtence* and *protection* to, and from each other, that each other's circumſtances and abilities make neceſſary and call for? Which ſurely we cannot but know, if we turn our thoughts upon ourſelves, and upon the reſt of our fellow-creatures; and then we cannot but

know likewiſe, that it is *right* and *fit*, in the nature of the thing, that we ſhould introduce as much happineſs into the creation as we can, by rendering ourſelves the moſt *agreeable* and the moſt *uſeful* members of ſociety, that we are capable of being. We cannot but know, if we reflect, that when we live under a ſuitable ſenſe of the *divine kindneſs*, and pay our acknowledgments to God, in a way which is moſt expreſſive of his *excellency* and *goodneſs*; and when, by an humble, meek, affable, and courteous behaviour, we have rendered ourſelves agreeable to all around us; and by the exerciſe of love and pity, and a kind aſſiſtance, we have removed the *uneaſineſs*, and contributed to the *happineſs* of our fellow-creatures, as far as it had been in our power; I ſay, as we cannot but know, that ſuch a temper and conduct is *highly valuable* in itſelf, and *becoming us* as men; ſo we cannot but know, that it will render us truly *acceptable* and *well-pleaſing* to God. This, in ſhort, is true religion. This is filling up that relation we ſtand in to God and to our fellow-creatures, and anſwering the wiſe and good purpoſe of our Creator, in calling us into being. And therefore it is this, and this only, which, in the nature of the thing, can, and will render us approveable in his ſight. This is what approves itſelf to the underſtanding of all men; and yet it is thought by ſome, that there is not any thing more difficult to *diſcover*, nor repreſented as more *myſterious*, than true religion; tho' by the way, this reflects *diſhonour* upon the *divine conduct*, as if God had made the way to his favour ſo exceeding *difficult*, that none but men of *letters* and *large abilities* could diſcover it; and had left the reſt of mankind in their hands, to guide them right or wrong, as they pleaſe, in a matter of ſuch importance.

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If true religion was a *precarious* thing, and founded upon the arbitrary will of God, then indeed, as nothing but a *revelation* of that will could discover it; so it might be delivered in such a way, as to leave room for *dispute*, and men might be under perpetual doubts and fears about it. And the most that could be done, in such a case, would be a *diligent* and *sincere* endeavour to know the divine will, and an *honest practising* what, upon such enquiry, appeared to be so; and then to trust to the *mercy* and *goodness* of its Author for acceptance, tho' even such a conduct could not afford a proper foundation for *comfort* and *satisfaction*; because the wisest and best behaviour may not prevail for acceptance with a being, whose actions are not directed by the moral fitness of things, but by arbitrary pleasure; at least, we can have no assurance that it will. But this is by no means the case; true religion, or that duty we owe to our Creator and to our fellow-creatures, and which is the ground of divine acceptance, being nothing else, but the *acting agreeably* to that relation we stand in to God and to each other; the obligation to which arises not from an arbitrary command, but from the moral fitness of things.

Would we then be truly religious? that is, would we find favour and acceptance with our Maker? this is the only and the certain way to it, *viz.* to put on such a *temper of mind*, and such a *behaviour* as becomes us as men; and then we shall most certainly find *favour* with God. There is not any thing but *agreeableness* in the subject, which can possibly make it the object of divine favour. For tho' men, from a mistaken judgment, or from vitiated affections, may be led to love that which is the proper object of their hatred, and dislike that, which, in the nature of the thing, is the proper object of their approbation; yet this cannot be the case, with re-

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pect to God; becauſe, as his underſtanding cannot be *mis-led*, ſo there is not any thing in nature, which can poſſibly *vitiate* his affections. And if this be the caſe, then certainly it becomes us all to put on ſuch a *lovelineſs*, that is, ſuch an agreeable uſeful temper and conduct, as will, in the nature of the thing, render us truly *amiable* and *lovely* in the eyes of our Maker; and not to flatter ourſelves that we are ſharers in divine love, whilſt our diſagreeable tempers and actions render us the proper objects of divine diſpleaſure. Let us not then deceive ourſelves in a matter of ſuch importance, by making that the ground of divine acceptance, which does not, in the nature of the thing, entitle us to it. It is not a *ſtrong aſſent* to the truth of a propoſition, built upon a *divine teſtimony*; nor a *conſtant* and *ſerious* attendance upon ceremonies, tho' of *divine* appointment; nor the being *united* to this, or that religious party, much leſs an *angry* and *bitter zeal*, ſpent in defending and propagating the opinions we embrace, or the party we are united to: I ſay, it is not theſe which can poſſibly render us *agreeable* to ſuch a wiſe and good Being as God is. That, in the nature of the thing, muſt ariſe from the agreeableneſs of our *tempers* and *actions*, conſidering our frame and compoſition. Neither will God be any ways *bribed* into a liking and approbation of us, whilſt, in our tempers and actions, we continue to be diſagreeable. It is not the offering to him *thouſands of rams*, nor *ten thouſands of rivers of oil*, nor the *watchings* and *faſtings*, the *prayers* and *tears* of a man's ſelf, nor the *labours*, nor *ſufferings*, nor the *intreaties* of another in his behalf, which can poſſibly render a diſagreeable creature pleaſing to, and acceptable to his Maker. For tho' men's affections may be *bribed* or *betrayed*; yet ſurely this cannot be the caſe, with reſpect to

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God, who is ſet far above every *weakneſs* of every kind; and conſequently there is not any thing but *perſonal virtuouſneſs*, which can ſecure to a man the divine favour. The ſum of the matter is this. Man is an intelligent free agent, excellently conſtituted for ſocial felicity, as I have before ſhewn; and when, under a grateful ſenſe of divine kindneſs, he ſtudies to imitate his Maker, in communicating happineſs to all, as far as it is in his power, by rendering himſelf agreeable and uſeful to the reſt of his fellow-creatures; and by endeavouring to make them happy, as well as himſelf; then it is that he commences a *lovely creature*, and muſt *approve* himſelf to God. And the more or leſs he is of this, or of the contrary, the more or leſs he is *lovely* or *diſagreeable* to his Maker. But,

Poſſibly it may be urged, that the principles, I have laid down, are inconſiſtent with *divine revelation*, and deſtructive of all *revealed religion*, and the like. To which it may be anſwered, that it is not ſo. I have only been ſhewing what it is, in the nature of the thing, that will certainly recommend men to *God's favour*. To which I here add, that the buſineſs of divine revelation is not to make or conſtitute duty, but to *declare* it; and to propoſe ſuch arguments and motives, as are proper to reduce men to, and engage them in the *love* and *practice* of it. If men had followed nature, and acted upon reaſon, according to our Saviour's juſt remark, then there had been no need of revelation. *They that are whole* (ſaid he) *have no need of the phyſician*, (and conſequently have no need of phyſick) *but they that are ſick. I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*, Mark ii. 17. But, ſuch has been the misfortune of the generality of mankind, that partly by a *wrong education*, and partly by other cauſes

ſes, their original conſtitutions have been depraved, that is, their underſtandings have been *mis-led*, and their appetites and affections *vitiated*; and they have been ſo far from making the moral fitneſs of things the rule and meaſure of their actions, that, on the contrary, they have ſuffered themſelves to be governed by *humour*, *private intereſt*, and the like; and have eaſily ſubmitted to the arbitrary commands of every one, who has declared himſelf a *heavenly* meſſenger; inſomuch that cruel and hurtful, as well as childiſh and trifling ſuperſtitions, have been zealouſly contended for as true religion. And, that this has been the ſtate of the *religious world*, I preſume will not be denied. The proper queſtion then, ariſing from hence, will be (taking in the ſtate and condition of mankind) Whether there is a *moral fitneſs* or *unfitneſs* in God's interpoſing to diſcover to his creatures ſuch rules of action, as are ſuitable to, and becoming their rational and manly nature; and to repreſent to them the certain conſequences of a good or bad life, with regard to his favour or diſpleaſure? I ſay, the proper queſtion is, Whether there is a moral fitneſs or unfitneſs in God's interpoſing, as aforeſaid? If there is a *moral unfitneſs* in ſuch a conduct, then I allow the conſequence, *viz.* that no *divine revelation* can poſſibly take place upon my principles. But on the other ſide, if there is a *moral fitneſs* in God's interpoſing to give a revelation to his creatures, then, I ſay, the principles, I have laid down, are ſo far from being *prejudicial* to divine revelation, that, on the contrary, they afford the moſt *concluſive* argument for it.

If it ſhould be father urged, allowing the foregoing principles are conſiſtent with divine revelation; yet they muſt conclude againſt all *poſitive inſtitutions* which have no moral fitneſs

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in them, but are founded on the arbitrary command of the Almighty. Before I reply, I beg leave to repeat what I have already obſerved in the *ſupplement* to my *previous queſtion*, namely, "that "in order to judge aright of the moral fitneſs or "unfitneſs of any action, every circumſtance "and conſequence, which ſtands related to it, "muſt be taken into the caſe; becauſe the fitneſs "or unfitneſs of an action ariſes from the good or "bad purpoſes it is ſubſervient to. And theſe "oftentimes ariſe from the different circumſtan-"ces the action is performed under; ſo that the "ſame action may be fit under ſome circumſtan-"ces, and unfit under others." Again, I *obſerve*, experience ſhews, that the generality of mankind are *diſpoſed* to, and much *affected* with ceremony and external obſervances; which, like words ſerve to *excite* and *expreſs*, not only the conceptions, but the paſſions of the mind: and theſe they may make uſe of not only in their ordinary intercourſe with each other, but alſo in their *ſolemn addreſſes* and *applications* to God: and men vary in the uſe of theſe, ſome uſing one, ſome another, ſome applying to them one ſignification, ſome another, according to the different uſages or opinions of the ages or countries in which men live, or the different religious parties they are joined with, or the different ways of thinking, which by their education, or ſome other accident, they have been led into. Again, I *obſerve*, that as ceremonies are ſometimes *ſubſervient* to men's *good*, by leading them to *proper reflections*, and by exciting in them *good affections*; ſo they are more frequenly ſubſervient to the contrary, by bringing men under the yoke of *burdenſome* and *hurtful ſuperſtitions*; by accaſioning in them a *bitter zeal* againſt their fellow-creatures, when their opinions and practice, with reſpect to theſe, run croſs to each other,

other, and by *misleading* them with regard to *true religion*; men's attendance on, and zeal for ceremonies, being frequently put in the place of virtue and made the *ground* of divine acceptance. These things being premised,

I *answer*, The proper question, in this case, will be, (taking in the state of mankind,) how much they are *disposed* to external observances, and how *liable* they are to make a *bad use* of them. I say, the question is, when all circumstances and consequences are taken into the case, whether it is *morally fit* or *unfit* for God to interpose, by appointing some ceremonies (which are least burdensome as the marks of our respect to him; to preserve peace and unity amongst mankind, to lead us to virtue, and to prevent our running into more burdensome and hurtful superstitions? So that, before any consequence can be fairly drawn from the principles I have laid down, either for or against divine revelation, or positive institutions, this point must first be cleared, *viz.* that it is either morally fit, or unfit, for God to interpose in the case referred to. Upon the whole I *observe* that God does not *command* for *commanding sake*, or by way of *tax* upon his creatures; but, on the contrary, all his commands and institutions are intended for our good. And it is when that end is answered, that they become *useful* to us, and we become *acceptable* to God: and therefore the bare compliance with, yea the most fervent zeal for *ceremonies* and *divine institutions*, when separated from the love and practice of virtue, cannot make us the proper objects of divine regard. This is evident from the nature of the thing, to which I shall add the following testimonies.

Micah vi. 6, 7, 8. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of*

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a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewn thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Isaiah i. 11——17. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and of the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me, the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; and when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.* In fine, divine revelation must, when *rightly* understood, be consistent with nature; and consequently, what I have fairly deduced, from the reason of things, cannot be *prejudicial* to it, nor to revealed religion founded upon it.

Thus I have gone thro' what I proposed. I shall now close up this subject with the following remark; *namely*, that as having *right notions* of the deity, when consider'd in his moral capacity, is the ground and foundation of all *true religion*; so the having a *wrong* and *unworthy* idea of God, when consider'd in that same capacity, is the foundation of all *religious superstition*, whether exercised in

in men's paſſions or actions. For as religious ſuperſtition, with regard to our paſſions, conſiſts in exerciſing our *hopes* and *fears*, with reſpect to God when there is no juſt ground for the exerciſe of them; ſo thoſe hopes and fears naturally ſpring from a *falſe notion* of the deity, with regard to his moral character. When we ſuppoſe ſuch a *temper of mind* in our Creator as he is a ſtranger to, and when we conſider him as governing his actions by ſuch *rules* as he is the fartheſt from; as ſuch an unworthy conception of God will naturally alarm our *paſſions*, ſo all thoſe hopes and fears which ariſe from, and are founded upon it, will be exceedingly *ſuperſtituous* and *groundleſs*. The caſe is the ſame, with reſpect to men's actions. For when they have formed in their minds a wrong and unworthy idea of God, with regard to the moral rectitude of his nature, then they are *ſuperſtituouſly* led upon that account to do many things as *duty*, and to avoid many other as *ſins*, when there is no *juſt ground* nor foundation for either. And the more groſs and unworthy men's conceptions of God are in this reſpect, the more *groſs* and *vile* will that ſuperſtition be, which is produced by it. When men conſider God as an *abſolute Sovereign*, whoſe actions are directed not by the fitneſs of things, but by the arbitrary pleaſure, and that he will reſpect men more for the *orthodoxy* of their opinions, or for their *attendance* on, and *zeal* for this or that ceremony, and the like, than for the *ſweetneſs* of their tempers, or the *virtuouſneſs* of their lives; and that he hates and will puniſh men for their *innocent miſtakes* concerning himſelf, or the ſervice they are to pay to him; as ſuch an opinion is very wrong in itſelf, and diſhonourable to the deity, ſo men are eaſily and naturally led, by it, to think that *religious perſecution* is pleaſing to God; this being (in their

their way of thinking) a conformity to the *divine pattern*, in hating and puniſhing thoſe, whom they think God hates and will puniſh. And thus a falſe and unworthy opinion of the deity, with regard to his moral character, will lead men to actions which are moſt *injurious* to mankind, and moſt *diſhonourable* and *hateful* to God.

Our Saviour ſaid to his Diſciples, as in *John* xvi. 2, 3. *They (viz.* the *Jews) ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues; yea the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice. And theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me.* In theſe words our Lord obſerves, that men's religious ſuperſtition would lead them to the killing of God's ſervants, out of zeal for his honour. He likewiſe obſerves, that the ground of this ſuperſtitious zeal is their *ignorance* and *falſe notions* of the deity; which ignorance muſt relate to him, with regard to his moral character. The *Jews* ignorance of God could not relate to his natural character; becauſe they had as *juſt ideas* of him in that reſpect, as the chriſtians. Neither could their ignorance of this kind (ſuppoſing they had been juſtly chargeable) be productive of ſuch *barbarities* as our Lord ſaid they would be guilty of. A wrong opinion of God's natural properties, his perſonality, and the like, cannot, in the nature of the thing, lay a foundation for thinking that religious perſecution is *pleaſing to God*; and conſequently cannot have any ſuch influence upon men's *tempers* and *actions*, as was the caſe, with reſpect to the *Jews* beforementioned. Theſe *Jews* conſidered God as an abſolute ſovereign, the ground of whoſe favour or diſpleaſure is not the perſonal virtuouſneſs or viciouſneſs of his creatures, but their ſubmitting or not ſubmitting to what he *arbitrarily* makes the conditions of his acceptance. They likewiſe con-

ſidered themſelves as thoſe who had the good fortune to be ſingled out for *divine love?* that God had, from mere ſovereign pleaſure, made them *his people*; that he had given them the only and the certain conditions of his *favour*, and that he had excluded the reſt of mankind from any ſhare in his affections. And as theſe were the unworthy ideas they had of God and of his conduct; ſo they were very eaſily led to conclude from them, that the *afflicting* and *grieving*, and even *killing* thoſe whom they preſumed God had prepared for diſtruction, would be a ſacrifice acceptable and well-pleaſing to him. *The time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice. And theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me.*

I will only add, that to know, or have a juſt idea of God, with regard to his moral character, is the *moſt noble* and the moſt *uſeful knowledge*, which the mind of man can be furniſhed with. To know God in his natural capacity, that is, to know him, with regard to his metaphyſical nature or eſſence, his perſonality, his natural properties, ſuch as neceſſary exiſtence, immenſity, and the like; ſuch knowledge may make us *good philoſophers*, and that is the moſt it can poſſibly do. But to know God in his moral capacity, this may make us *good men*, as it is capable of having a powerful influence upon our minds and lives, by diſpoſing us to model them after the *divine pattern*, and to render ourſelves the *ſuitable* and *proper* objects of his approbation and affection.

I am, Sir,
Your Obliged
Humble Servant, &c.

TRACT

TRACT XXI.

A

SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

Vindication of God's Moral Character.

Wherein three Objections are examined; two urged againſt the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, and the other againſt human Liberty.

IT being thought by ſome, that, in my Vindication of God's Moral Character, I have not ſo *fully vindicated* the *divine conduct*, as might have been expected from a performance of that kind; I think it proper to offer what follows, by way of *anſwer* to what has been urged on this head. And, to make way for a difficulty in the preſent caſe, the following principles are laid down, *viz. firſt*, that God perfectly foreknows in what inſtances, and to what degree, every man will be virtuous or vicious, before his formation or conception. *Secondly*, that there are ſome perſons, who, in fact, prove to be exceedingly vicious, by their being guilty of a great deal of *moral evil*, with reſpect to themſelves, and thereby introduce a great deal of natural evil, or *unhappineſs*, upon others. And, *thirdly*, that as there are ſome *actions* neceſſary to human formation or conception; ſo there are a multitude of thoſe action which take place, and yet no con-

ception follows. Theſe things being premiſed, from hence it is argued, that either God does *immediately interpoſe*, and by his particular providence render all thoſe actions ſucceſsful upon which human conception depends, in all thoſe inſtances wherein conception does follow or accompany ſuch actions; or elſe he *does not* interpoſe, but leaves that affair to be conducted by thoſe laws by which the natural world is governed. If the *firſt* is the caſe, then it would be an inſtance of *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* for God *not* to interpoſe in all thoſe caſes upon which the lives of all vicious perſons depend, and thereby to prevent the exiſtence of ſuch perſons; whereas, by his interpoſing, he does manifeſtly occaſion a multitude of evil. But, if the latter be the caſe, then it would be an inſtance of *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* for God to *interpoſe*, and by his particular providence render the conception of all vicious perſons *abortive*; whereas, his forbearing to do this is a manifeſt inſtance of the contrary.

With reſpect to the *firſt* branch of the objection, it is ſufficient to anſwer, that God *does not* interpoſe, as aforeſaid, to render thoſe actions ſucceſsful upon which human conception depends; conception being as much the *produce of*, and under the direction of the *laws* of *nature*, as any other branch of this ſyſtem of things; and thoſe laws are as exactly *complied with* and followed in all thoſe inſtances in which conception does, as in thoſe inſtances in which it does not follow or accompany ſuch actions.

With reſpect to the latter part of the objection, the anſwer is, that if it would be an inſtance of *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* for God thus immediately *to interpoſe*, and thereby to prevent evil, by preventing the exiſtence of all vicious perſons, then it would be *a like* inſtance of wiſdom and goodneſs

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for him immediately to interpoſe and prevent every *ſhipwreck* every *injurious fire*, yea, every *evil* of every kind. The conſequence of which would be the conſtance *ſuſpending* of thoſe laws by which the natural world is governed. So that the objection, in its laſt reſult, amounts to this, *namely*, that it would have been an inſtance of wiſdom and goodneſs for God *not* to have given being to this world. But this objection cannot be of weight, except it can be made appear that there has heen *more unhappineſs* than *happineſs* introduced by it.

If it ſhould be further urged, that tho' things cannot be otherwiſe than they are in this reſpect, in the preſent ſtate of things; yet God might, if he had pleaſed, have *prevented* the exiſtehce of all vicious perſons, by giving ſuch laws to the natural world, as would have introduced none but perſons of *virtue* and *honour*: I *anſwer*, that vice is not occaſioned by any *defect* in the law of nature; but, on the contrary, it ariſes from that *liberty* and freedom of action which takes place in every *moral agent*. The * human compoſition is excellently conſtituted to ſerve the purpoſes of virtue and true goodneſs; and, upon the whole, tends to render man an *agreeable* and a *uſeful* creature. But then, as man is a moral agent, he muſt be at liberty to *direct* or *reſtrain* his inclinations and endeavours, either to ſerve the purpoſes of virtue, or the contrary; ſo that when vice takes place, this is ſo far from being the produce of the laws of nature, that, on the contrary, it is the *perverſion* and *abuſe* of thoſe laws; and ſuch abuſe is the ſubject of every man's *free choice*. So that to ſay, God might have given ſuch laws as would have prevented this evil, is the ſame as to ſay that he might have prevented our *agencies*.

* *See my* Vindication of God's Moral Character.

Beſides, this objection is founded upon a ſuppoſition, that God *foreknows* in what inſtances, and to what degree, every man will be either virtuous or vicious, before his formation or conception. But this is only *preſumed*, and not proved; and therefore as the *ſtrength* of the objection chiefly depends upon the *truth* of this ſuppoſition, ſo, till this point is *proved*, the objection cannot be of any weight. Again,

Secondly, It is urged, that whereas all the *moral*, and a great part of the *natural evil* which is in the world, is occaſioned by that *liberty* and freedom of action which takes place in man; and, whereas God *foreknew* that man would *abuſe* that liberty, and that he will be *ſeverely puniſhed* in another world for that abuſe; therefore liberty, upon the whole, is a *curſe* and not a bleſſing; it being better for man not to have this *power*, than to have it, and be *liable* to abuſe it; and, conſequently, as the *with-holding* this gift from man would have been an inſtance of wiſdom and goodneſs, ſo the making man a *free creature* is a manifeſt inſtance of the contrary.

I *anſwer*, *firſt*, Whether God does or does not abſolutely foreknow the actions of men is a diſputable point, which, I think, cannot be *abſolutely determined* on either ſide; and therefore the divine preſcience ought not to be brought into the caſe; becauſe, to argue from thence is to draw concluſions from *uncertain* principles. And as to the puniſhment which will be inflicted on vicious men in another world, this will be done in a way perfectly *conſiſtent* with divine wiſdom and goodneſs. And whereas, in the objection, man is ſuppoſed capable of *exiſting*, and enjoying the *pleaſures* he now taſtes, tho' *deſtitute* of liberty; and that God might have *given* or *with-held* this power from him as he pleaſed; this, I think, is

a *wrong*

a *wrong* repreſentation of the caſe; becauſe liberty is *abſolutely neceſſary* to conſtitute ſuch a creature as man, and to render him *capable* of thoſe pleaſures he now enjoys. The pleaſures with which man is here entertained, whether ſenſual, intellectual, or moral, ſuppoſe him poſſeſſed of the faculties of *intelligence* and *activity*, to render him capable of thoſe pleaſures. So that where theſe faculties are wanting, as in *ſtones*, *trees*, and the like, there is an utter *incapacity* for the enjoyment of thoſe pleaſures; and if *agency* is neceſſary to render a creature capable of taſting the pleaſures which this globe affords, then *liberty* is neceſſary; becauſe, ſtrictly ſpeaking, agency and liberty are the ſame thing. So that the queſtion will be at laſt reſolved into this, *namely*, whether it be *conſiſtent* with, or rather, whether it be an *inſtance* of wiſdom and goodneſs, or of the contrary, for God to call ſuch a creature as *man* into being. To which I anſwer,

Secondly, That man, as a free creature, comes under a two-fold conſideration, *viz. firſt*, as a ſpecies of beings, who ſtand related to the reſt of the *animal world*; and, in the exerciſe of their liberty, are the *occaſion* of both evil and good to them. And, *ſecondly*, as a ſpecies of beings, who, in the exerciſe of their liberty, are *introductive* of both evil and good to *each other*. If we conſider man, as he ſtands related to the reſt of the animal world, in this view the *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* of God are abundantly diſplayed; becauſe man, in the exerciſe of his liberty, is introductive of much more *happineſs* to the animals below him, than the contrary. For tho' ſome particular *animals*, or ſome particular *ſpecies* of them, may receive *more evil* than good from the hands of men; yet this is by no means the caſe, with reſpect to the animal world in general. It is by

man's *labour* and *induſtry* that the earth is cultivated and improved, by which means yeild a plentiful increeſe for their uſe. It is man who watches the ſeaſons, and gathers in the ſummer to preſerve them in the winter, and makes that proviſion for them which they are by no means capable of doing for themſelves. So that, thro' the care and induſtry of man, multitudes are called into being, which otherwiſe would have no exiſtence. And as to thoſe that would have exiſted, the lives of multitudes of them are rendered *more happy*, and their deaths *leſs affective* than otherwiſe they would have been. This, I think, will appear to be the caſe, if we conſider the ſpecies of mankind, as *ſeperated* from this globe; ſo that, I think, it may be truly ſaid that man is a *bleſſing*, or an inſtance of divine goodneſs to the *animal world*. Again, if we conſider man as a ſpecies of beings who ſtand related to, and in the exerciſe of their liberty are the cauſe of both evil and good to each other; in this view alſo, the producing of man into being will appear to be an inſtance of divine *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*. Man, in his natural compoſition, is not only *capable* of happineſs, but he is likewiſe cecellently conſtituted to promote and carry on the *common happineſs* of his kind. So that the wiſdom and goodneſs of God are abundantly ſhewn in the human *make* and *conſtitution*; and tho' man is capable of *vitiating* his nature, and *abuſing* his liberty, and thereby brings unhappineſs upon himſelf and others of his ſpecies; yet, I think, this ought not to be a *bar* to his exiſtence, becauſe, upon the whole, the evil introduced by the abuſe of man's liberty is by no means equal to the good introduced by a right uſe of it.

It is true, that men are too apt to abuſe their liberty, to ſerve the purpoſes of *vice* and *wickedneſs*; and that there are *ſome perſons* and *ſome places*, and perhaps

perhaps *ſome ſeaſons*, in which vice runs much higher than in others. But as to the *generality* of of men and of *their actions*, if the caſe could be fairly examined, I imagine, that virtue and happineſs would appear to have much the *precedency* in them over their contraries. For tho' the inſtances of perſons *extraordinarily virtuous* are but few, when compared with the generality of mankind; yet that is likewiſe the caſe of thoſe who are *extraordinarily vicious*. The bulk of mankind, as their *actions* and *characters* are mixed, partly good and virtuous, and partly evil and vicious; ſo they abound in the *former* more than in the latter. And this, I think, would evidently appear to be the caſe, if men would judge impartially from their own experience herein; then, I imagine, they would be forced to confeſs, that they have, in the courſe of their lives, met with many more inſtances of *truth* and *honeſty*, of *kindneſs* and *beneficence*, than of their contraries. I ſpeak this of the generality of mankind. Men are generally more inquiſitive about the *bad* than the *good* deeds of their neighbours; by which means the former of theſe furniſhes out *materials* for converſation, much more than the latter; ſo that men's *good works lie concealed*, whilſt their evil deeds are publiſhed upon the houſe-top. Beſides, *one* vicious action (like a dead fly in the ointment of perfume) ſpoils a man's character, and makes all his good deeds to be *overlook*, or elſe looked on with an *evil eye*. Moreover, men are apt to have a much *quicker* ſenſe of the injuries done them, than of the benefits they receive from each other. Aud all theſe give occaſion for a *loud clamour*, and raiſe an *invincible prejudice* againſt our ſpecies; every one being ready to complain of the general prevalency of vice, tho' no one will allow the charge to be juſt, with reſpect to himſelf. If each indivi-

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dual ſhould be charged with having been more frequent in the practice of *falſhood* and *injuſtice*, of *cruelty* and *inhumanity*, than of the contrary virtues; I imagine there are but few who would plead guilty. Upon the whole, I think, there is *juſt ground* to preſume that it would appear, if it could be tried, that mankind (bad as they are, or as their caſe may be repreſented by an artful complainer) have much more *virtue* than *vice* amongſt them; and, conſequently, that the calling them into being is a manifeſt inſtance of divine *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*. And,

Tho' ſome men will be puniſhed with *unſpeakable miſery* in another world for their *vicious* behaviour here; yet, I think, that ought not in reaſon to bar a *wiſe* and *good God* from calling our ſpecies into being; ſince it is much more *unreaſonable* and *unkind*, on the other ſide, for God to *withold* his kindneſs and benevolence from a ſpecies of beings, merely becauſe ſome of that ſpecies will fooliſhly and wickedly *exclude themſelves* from being ſharers in it, and bring upon themſelves extreme miſery. Again,

Thirdly, It has been likewiſe objected, that I have not gone to the *bottom*, nor reach'd the *main difficulty* urged againſt *human liberty*, *viz.* that as *motive* in the excitement to action; ſo a man is as much *forced* or *compelled* to act by that excitement, as a ſtone is to fall to the earth, when it is thrown up into the air; becauſe he not only *does*, but he *muſt* act according to the laſt or *final judgment* of his underſtanding, that is, he *will* and *muſt* always do what he judges *beſt* at the time, it being impoſſible for him to do otherwiſe.

This, I think, I have fully * anſwered in the tract referred to; wherein I have ſhewn, that motive is not a *power* or *active cauſe*, but barely a *paſſive* reaſon of the action; and in which I have

* Vindication of God's Moral Character.

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likewiſe ſhewn, that a man is not under a *neceſſity* of doing what he judges beſt at the time, whether the term *beſt* be uſed to ſignify what is judged beſt upon the *whole*, or what is judged will give him the *greateſt preſent pleaſure*. The caſe is the ſame, whether the term *beſt* be uſed to ſignify what is beſt for a *man's ſelf*, or what is beſt for the *publick*, or the like. In which caſes, it is moſt evident, that no man is under a *neceſſity* of doing what he judges beſt at the time, taking the term *beſt* in any one reſpect whatever. The ſame perſon at one time, chuſes to gratify a natural inclination, without entering into the *queſtion*, whether that gratification, upon the whole, be beſt, or not; at another time he reſolutely follows his inclination, tho' under a conviction that the gratification, upon the whole, is *wrong*; and, at another time, he chuſes to deny himſelf that preſent pleaſure, becauſe he is convinced that, upon the whole, it is *evil*. And therefore to ſay that this perſon did, in all theſe inſtances, do what he judged beſt at the time, is to fix to the term *beſt* *different* and *contrary ideas*, and to introduce the utmoſt confuſion.

If it ſhould be farther urged, that tho' a man does not always do what he judges beſt at the time, ſuppoſing the term *beſt* be uſed in the ſame reſpect; yet he does always do what he judges beſt, uſing that term in one reſpect or other: I *anſwer*, admitting this to be true, yet it is not to the purpoſe; the being beſt at the time, that is, the giving the greateſt preſent pleaſure, and the being beſt upon the whole, theſe are *different* and *contrary ideas*, when they come in competition; that is, when one is an excitement to act, and the other is an excitement to the contrary; which is frequently the caſe. So, again, the being beſt for a man's ſelf, and the being beſt for the pub-

lick,

lick, are different and contrary ideas, when they come in competition, as aforeſaid. And therefore, as there is not any thing in the human compoſition which *neceſſarily determines* a man to prefer a preſent good to what is beſt upon the whole; to what will give him the greateſt preſent pleaſure; nor to prefer his own intereſt to that of the publick, nor the publick intereſt to his own; ſo from hence it will follow, that *action*, in either caſe, is the produce, not of *neceſſity*, but of *liberty*. If he prefers a preſent pleaſure to what is beſt upon the whole, or if he chuſes otherwiſe, when theſe come in competition, he is *voluntary* herein; he might, if he had pleaſed, have choſe the contrary. Again, if a man prefers his own intereſt to that of the publick or prefers the publick to his own, in either caſe, it is a manifeſt inſtance of *liberty*; ſeeing there is not any thing in nature which neceſſarily determines him to be either *generous* or *ſelfiſh*. So that the giving ſuch a latitude to the term *beſt* does not affect the caſe at all.

If it ſhould be farther urged, that when a man prefers a preſent good to that which is beſt for him, upon the whole; he then judges that beſt which is the ſubject of his preſent choice, or elſe he would not chuſe it: I *anſwer*, this is a miſtake; for if a man chuſes a preſent pleaſure, in *oppoſition* to that which is beſt, upon the whole, when he makes the *compariſon* between them; then it is impoſſible for him to chuſe the former, under the conſideration of its being *beſt*, becauſe it is impoſſible for a man to judge it beſt in the preſent caſe. It is not poſſible, in the nature of the thing, for a man to judge, that a preſent *momentary pleaſure* is really better than a *future good*, that is vaſtly *greater* in itſelf, and a thouſand time more *durable*. The latter of theſe will unavoidably appear beſt to every *moral agent*; it being above the power of

every

every ſuch agent to over-rule his judgment, and thereby to make himſelf otherwiſe: I ſay, this will unavoidably be the caſe, if he takes a *view* of theſe, and makes a *compariſon* betwixt them; but if he makes no ſuch compariſon, then there is no place for the term *beſt* in the preſent queſtion; then the preſent pleaſures becomes a *motive* to action, not under the conſideration of its being beſt, but under the conſideration of its being a *preſent pleaſure*. And tho' a man cannot command his judgment, and make himſelf think that that pleaſure is really *preferrable* to a vaſtly greater and more durable future good; yet he can command his actions; and herein conſiſts his *liberty*, he can *give* or *deny himſelf* that pleaſure, as he pleaſes.

If it ſhould be farther urged, that in this caſe a man does what he judges beſt at the time, not as beſt, when compared with a greater good; but, in oppoſition to ſelf-denial, he judges it better at that time to gratify his inclination than to deny it: I *anſwer*; that men do ſometimes *prefer* a preſent pleaſure to ſelf-denial is allowed; but that a ſenſe of preſent pleaſure *compels* them to chuſe it, this is denied upon good grounds, *viz.* becauſe every act of ſelf-denial is an *inſtance* of, and thereby an *evident proof* of the contrary.

If it ſhould be urged, that, when a man denies himſelf, as aforeſaid, he then judges ſelf-denial beſt; not beſt, conſidered as ſelf-denial, but as it leads to a greater future good: I *anſwer*, that to uſe the term *beſt* in ſo *looſe* and *confuſed* a way, as above, ſometimes making it to ſignify what is beſt in one reſpect; and when that will not anſwer the purpoſe, then to make it ſignify what is beſt in another reſpect; and when that will not do, then to tack about to the former ſenſe of the term *beſt*, and ſo on: I ſay, thus to ring the changes upon the term *beſt* is to *play* with words, and looks more like *banter* than *argument*.

TRACT XXII.

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

PERSECUTION,

WHEREIN

The Grounds upon which Chriſtians afflict and grieve, and bereave each other of Life, for their different Opinions in Matters of Religion, are examin'd.

THAT mankind have various and different opinions, with regard to a variety of ſubjects, is abundantly evident from experience; but that ſuch difference in ſentiments becomes the *ground* and *foundation* for *reſentment* is, I think, peculiar to the ſubject of *religion*. If men differ ever ſo much in their judgments, with regard to this or that or the other ſcience, no perſecution follows; but if chriſtians have happen'd to differ from each other in their religious principles, their *paſſions* have been alarm'd, their *reſentment* has been rais'd, and they have been too often led to *hurt* and *injure*, and ſometimes to *deſtroy* one another. And,

Tho'

Tho' the ſuffering party, in their remonſtranſtrances with their afflictors, have urged the *unchriſtianlineſs* and the *unmanlineſs* of ſuch a procedure, and the *unreaſonableneſs* of that burden which their fellow-chriſtians have laid upon them; yet this has proved inſufficient to obtain them relief. Yea, that which is moſt ſurprizing is, that thoſe very ſufferers, when they have gotten the reins of government into their own hands, have turned *perſecutors*, and have rejected thoſe arguments againſt perſecution, which themſelves had urged in their ſuffering ſtate. This having ſometimes been the caſe, I thought it might not be amiſs to enter into the queſtion, by examining the *grounds* upon which chriſtians afflict and grieve one another, for their different apprehenſions in matters of religion.

In order to which I obſerve, that *chriſtian truths*, or *principles*, conſider'd as ſuch, are thoſe, and only thoſe, which ariſe from, and are founded upon the *chriſtian revelation*. Thoſe propoſitions, whoſe evidence ariſes from the *nature of things*, cannot ſtrictly and properly be call'd chriſtian, tho' owned by chriſtians, and tho' contained in the chriſtian revelation; becauſe their *truth* and *certainty*, and the *evidence* by which they are proved to be ſo, are the ſame, whether chriſtianity and the chriſtian revelation have any being, or not. So that chriſtian truths or principles, conſider'd as ſuch, are thoſe only whoſe *credebility* ariſes from, and is founded on the *chriſtian revelation*; that is to ſay, is founded on the *Bible*: and conſequently it is the *Bible* only which is the *rule of truth*, in the preſent caſe. Again,

I *obſerve* farther, that as the *Bible* is the rule of truth, with regard to the point in hand; ſo this qualification, *viz.* its being conſiſtent with the *nature* and the *truth of things* is abſolutely neceſſary

to

to render it capable of being ſuch a rule. For if there are any propoſitions in the *Bible*, which when rightly underſtood are plainly *repugnant* to the nature or truth of things, all ſuch propoſitions muſt be allow'd to be *falſe*. And if the *Bible* lays down a falſe propoſition in one inſtance, and with relation to one point, then it *may* do the ſame in any other inſtance, and with relation to any other point. I ſay, this *may* be the caſe, for any thing we know to the contrary; ſeeing it has not given us any *infallible rule*, by which we can judge, whether the propoſition referr'd to be true, or falſe. And conſequently, if this were the caſe, then there could not any thing be fairly concluded from the *Bible*; and therefore it would juſtly be *excluded* from being the rule of truth in any point whatever.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that we have the uſe and exerciſe of our *underſtandings*, by which we diſcern and judge, whether the propoſition laid down be true, or not; then I ſay, that in every ſuch inſtance it is not the *Bible*, but the *evidence* ariſing from the *nature of things*, which is the rule of truth to us. So that if the *Bible* be admitted as the rule of truth, then the foremention'd qualification muſt be admitted as an *eſſential property* of this rule; and conſequently, every propoſition in the *Bible*, which in its *literal ſenſe* is repugnant to the nature or to the truth of things, ſuch propoſition muſt not be underſtood literally, but figuratively. As thus, *John* vii. 38. *He that believeth on me——— out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.* Now I ſay, if the *Bible* be admitted as the rule of truth, then this propoſition muſt be underſtood *figuratively*; becauſe the terms of which it is compoſed, if underſtood literally, that is, if we apply to them thoſe ideas which common uſage has fix'd, then the propoſition is plainly *repugnant*

pugnant to the *nature* and the *truth of things*. And,

Tho' the propoſitions contained in the *Bible* are partly literal and partly figurative, yet there are not every-where *land-marks* ſet up to point out to us, which is the one, and which is the other. Neither has it given us any certain *rule* of judging what is intended by thoſe figures; neither is there conſtituted an *infallible living judge* to determine in caſes of this nature. So that this is left to be diſcover'd by the *human underſtanding*; man muſt exerciſe his reaſoning capacity, by a careful reflection, upon the nature of things in general, and in particular upon the ſubject to which the propoſition relates. And from thence he muſt *deduce*, whether the propoſition is to be underſtood literally or figuratively; and if figuratively, then what is intended to be ſet forth by thoſe figures. And this, of courſe, lays a foundation for *miſtakes*, ſeeing men are liable to underſtand thoſe propoſitions *differently*, and to make different *applications* of thoſe figures; and conſequently, tho' the *Bible* be admitted as the rule of truth, yet it cannot, in the nature of the thing, be an *abſolute ſecurity* againſt error. Thus, with relation to the foremention'd propoſition, *He that believeth on me* (ſaith Chriſt) *out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water*. I have already obſerved, that the terms of this propoſition muſt be underſtood *figuratively*, becauſe if we underſtand them literally, then the propoſition is plainly repugnant to the nature and the truth of things. So that the queſtion here will be, what is intended to be ſet forth by thoſe figures. Now, tho' ſome men's opinion of them is as follows; *He that believeth on me*, that is, he who has an affecting ſenſe of thoſe important truths which I have publiſhed to the world, *out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water*; that

is, this will be in him a principle of action which will bring forth plentifully the fruit of good works: I ſay, tho' this is ſome men's ſenſe of the abovementioned propoſition, and tho' they think this is all which can be deduced from a careful reflection upon the nature of things in general, and upon the ſubject to which the propoſition relates; yet they may miſtake, becauſe there may poſſibly ſomething elſe be intended to be ſet forth by thoſe figures. I ſhall not here enter into the queſtion, what is intended by thoſe words, *He that believeth on me, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water*; but what I obſerve is, that as there is no *infalliable rule* of interpretation laid down in the *Bible*; and as there is not a *man*, or *body of men*, conſtituted to be an infallible judge of the ſenſe of ſcripture; ſo, of courſe, it muſt be the work of the *human underſtanding* to do it. And this opens a wide door to error. And as no man, or body of men, is conſtituted an infallible judge of the ſenſe of the *Bible*, to or for any other man, ſo, in the nature of the thing, one man is not *anſwerable* to another man, or body of men, for his ſenſe of ſcripture in this or in any other point; ſeeing no man can be obliged to *ſubmit his judgment* to another in any caſe, where that other has no *authority* over him. But no man, or body of men, can have an authority over the judgments of other men, except he, or they, be conſtituted an *infallible judge*, to give an *abſolute* and *certain determination* in the caſe referr'd to; which no man, or body of men, can *prove* themſelves to be. And, therefore, if another man ſhould give a *different* ſenſe, of the aforeſaid text, to what I may put upon it, it would be *unmanly* and *cruel* for me to diſreſpect him, and treat him ill upon that account; and it would be alike cruel and inhuman in him, or in any other man, or body of men,

men, to *diſreſpect* or treat me *ill* for the like reaſon. And,

Tho' the *church* of *Rome* pretends to be *infallible*, and under the ſhelter of that pretence ſets up her ſenſe of the ſcripture, as the *ſtandard* for all men to govern their judgments by, and requires them to receive her ſenſe as the *true ſenſe*; yet, alas! ſhe is not able to produce the ſhadow of a *proof* for what ſhe thus aſſumes; and therefore ſhe muſt ſtand *condemned*, in the judgment of God, and of every judicious man. Tho' it muſt be granted, that ſhe is much more *excuſable* than that *man*, or *body of men*, who make no pretence to infallibility in the preſent caſe, and yet ſet up *their ſenſe* of the *Bible* as the ſtandard for other men's judgments to be framed by, and *afflict* and *grieve* them, if they refuſe ſubjection to it; which procedure, ſurely, is moſt exceeding *monſtrous* and *vile*. And, as men are *liable* to err, in the preſent caſe, ſo if *one man*, or *body of men*, ſets up his or their opinion of things, as the ſtandard for other men's judgments to be formed by, this is making not the *Bible*, but his or their opinion of things the *rule of truth*; ſeeing ſuch a man, or body of men, is not conſtituted an *infallible judge*, and ſo is not qualify'd to give an abſolute and certain determination in the caſe before us. This is what the church of *Rome* are well aware of; and therefore they not only inſiſt upon the abſolute neceſſity of an infallible judge to determine in matters of faith, and to guard and ſecure men from error, but they likewiſe inſiſt, that *that infallible judge* is *with them*. And, as the *Papiſts* inſiſt upon the abſolute neceſſity of an infallible living judge to determine in matters of faith, and thereby to guard and ſecure men from error; ſo they *ground* that neceſſity upon this propoſition, *viz. That all errors, in matters of faith,*

are damnable. This is the foundation or groundwork upon which that prodigious fabrick, *viz. popery*, reſts. Make void this foundation and the *ſtrength* of popery, in point of *argument* is loſt and gone. And as popery, ſo *perſecution* is founded upon the ſame principle; for tho' every perſecutor does not inſiſt, that all errors, in point of faith, are damnable, yet generally they inſiſt, that *thoſe errors are ſo*, which they perſecute for; which comes to the ſame thing, becauſe it is the *damnableneſs* of error which is the *ground* of perſecution in either caſe. So that if the forementioned propoſition, *viz.* that errors, in point of faith, are damnable, can be ſhewed to be *erroneous*, then *popery* and *perſecution*, in point of argument, muſt fall together. But building upon the forementioned foundation is like building upon the ſand, which when juſt reaſoning and ſolid argument is brought againſt it, then the foundation is waſhed away, and the ſtately ſtructure, which reſts upon it, falls to the ground. For, as the *Bible*, when admitted as the *rule* of *truth*, is not an *abſolute ſecurity* againſt error, as I have ſhewn above; ſo all errors, of what kind ſoever, which ſpring from it, cannot, in the nature of the thing, lay a *juſt foundation* for divine diſpleaſure, becauſe they are the product of a *miſtaken* judgment only, and not of a *vicious* mind. If the caſe were otherwiſe, and mens miſtakes were their *crimes* (tho' this, indeed, is an impoſſible ſuppoſition, becauſe error cannot poſſibly have the *nature* of a crime in it) or if God would conſider it as *criminal* (tho' this, again, is making another impoſſible ſuppoſition, becauſe it is morally impoſſible for God to be guilty of ſo much *weakneſs* and *injuſtice*) I ſay, if the caſe were ſo, then there would be that *abſolute neceſſity* of an infallible living judge, as the church of *Rome* contends for, to *guard* and *ſecure* men

men from error, becauſe without ſuch a judge men would be perpetually running the *utmoſt hazard*: Tho' this, indeed, would not prove the Biſhop of *Rome* to be that *judge*, or that *infallibility* is any where lodged in the *church* of *Rome*.

Seeing then that error is the effect of judgment, and not of choice, and therefore cannot poſſibly have in it the nature of a crime; conſequently, *error*, let it relate to what point ſoever, cannot poſſibly render men the *ſuitable* and *proper objects* of divine diſpleaſure. And as error is not criminal in itſelf, ſo much leſs will *God* conſider and treat men *as criminals* upon the account of it; ſeeing *God is* a *righteous judge*, and therefore he will not eſteem or treat any man as a criminal, except he be really ſo. And as this is the truth of the caſe, ſo it is ſuch an anſwer to the *Papiſts* and *perſecutors*, as they cannot poſſibly get over; becauſe it is made up of *ſelf-evident propoſitions*; and conſequently the above propoſition (*viz.* that all, or that any errors in matters of faith are damnable, and which is the *ground-work* of popery and perſecution) is to be *denied abſolutely*, it being plainly repugnant to the nature of things, and therefore is *abſolutely falſe*. To diſtinguiſh here betwixt points *fundamental* and *not fundamental*, or in other words, points of greater or leſs importance to mankind; and to inſiſt, that *want* of *faith*, with regard to the former, will be judged *criminal* by Almighty God; this is to caſt a moſt ſhameful imputation upon the God of *truth* and *goodneſs*; ſeeing that the only *proper ground* of aſſent or diſſent, in any caſe, is not the greater or leſs importance of the ſubject to which the propoſition relates, but only the *ſtrength* or *weakneſs* of that evidence upon which the truth or falſeneſs of the propoſition depends. And ſince error does not *change* its nature by the greater or

leſs importance of the ſubject, but continues the ſame in every ſubject, of what importance ſoever it be; conſequently, diſſent muſt be equally *criminal*, or *innocent*, whether the ſubject be of great, or of no importance to us at all.

If it ſhould be urged, that error, in points of faith, does not become criminal by any *natural vileneſs* in error itſelf, but only in the preſent caſe it becomes ſo, as it caſts contempt upon Almighty God, by being a diſſent to a propoſition which he has revealed: I *anſwer*, that no man ever yet *refuſed* aſſent to a propoſition founded upon a divine teſtimony, when *known* to be ſuch. And if aſſent is at any time with-held from ſuch a propoſition, either for *want* of *conviction* that is founded upon a divine teſtimony, or that the ſenſe of the propoſition to which aſſent is demanded is the true ſenſe; in either of theſe caſes, it is ſo far from caſting contempt upon Almighty God, that, on the contrary, it is no more than with-holding aſſent in a caſe, in which, in the nature of the thing, it *ought not* to be given. In ſuch a caſe God's *veracity* is not in the leaſt impeach'd, and conſequently no injury is offered to his moral character; becauſe the preſent queſtion is not, whether the teſtimony of God be a proper *ground* of credit, and ſo whether all propoſitions whoſe credibility reſts upon it be the proper *objects* of aſſent, that being granted on all ſides; but whether aſſent ought to be given in a caſe, where there does not appear *ſufficient* evidence to determine the judgment on that ſide of the queſtion to which aſſent is demanded, neither are thoſe, who demand that aſſent, able to produce the ſhadow of a *proof*, that they are infallible, and ſo are qualified to give an abſolute and certain determination in the caſe referred to. I ſay, the queſtion is, whether, in *ſuch a caſe*, aſſent ought

to

to be given; and I think it is evident, from the nature of the thing, that it ought not; and if ſo, then, ſurely, it is a manifeſt *contempt*, and an *injury* offer'd to God's moral character, to repreſent him as requiring aſſent, and puniſhing men for with-holding it, in a caſe, where, in the nature of the thing, it *ought not* to be given.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that *faith* has the promiſe of *ſalvation* annex'd to it in the goſpel, and that *infidelity* is declared *damnable*. To this I *anſwer*, that faith, or the want of it, is not to be underſtood in a *philoſophical*, but in a *moral ſenſe*; that is, men will not be ſaved or damned for their *giving* or *with-holding* their aſſent to this propoſition, *viz.* that the goſpel of Chriſt is a divine revelation; but they will be ſaved or damned, as the *end* and *purpoſe* of that goſpel is or is not anſwered upon them. It is the ſame as if our Lord had ſaid, tho' men, by their ſin and wickedneſs, have expoſed themſelves to the juſt diſpleaſure of Almighty God, yet he now, by *my miniſtry*, makes this kind and gracious offer to them, *viz.* that if they will repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, then he will pardon their ſins, and receive them to favour; but, on the other ſide, if they will, notwithſtanding this kind offer, ſtill go on in their wickedneſs, then God will execute his higheſt diſpleaſure upon them. *He that believeth*, that is, he who accepts of this gracious offer, anſwers the end and purpoſe of it, by turning from the evil of his ways, and by bringing forth the fruits of newneſs of life, *he ſhall be ſaved*; *but he that believeth not*, that is, he who unworthily rejects this kind offer, by an obſtinate continuance in his folly, *he ſhall be damned*. This, I ſay, is the ſenſe of the aforeſaid declaration, as is abundantly evident, not only from the nature of the ſubject,

but alſo from the tenour of the *New Teſtament*. If I was in a houſe with a company of men, and was abſolutely certain that the houſe would fall to the ground in an hour's time, and conſequently that every ſoul preſent would *inevitably periſh*, except they fled out of it, before that fall; and if I gave them timely warning of their danger; in this caſe, it would not be their *faith* or their *infidelity*, with regard to this warning, but their going out, or *their continuing in this houſe*, which would be the *cauſe* of their *ſafety* or *deſtruction*. So in like manner, man, by his ſin and wickedneſs, has expoſed himſelf to God's diſpleaſure, and Chriſt is ſent to apprize him of his danger, and to ſhew him the only and the certain way of eſcaping from it, *viz.* by repentance, and reformation of his evil ways: Now if he ſo far hearkens to this meſſage as to repent and amend, he will be ſaved, whether he is ſatisfied of the *divinity* of this meſſage, or not; but, if he goes on in his wickedneſs, he will be damned, though he *believes* its divinity ever ſo ſtrongly. So, that in this caſe, it is not mens *infidelity*, ſtrictly ſpeaking, but their *obſtinate continuance in their ſins*, which is the *ground* and cauſe of their *damnation*. Beſides, if the forementioned terms were to be underſtood in a philoſophical ſenſe, then the propoſition, to which they relate, would be plainly *repugnant* to the *nature of things*; becauſe it is morally impoſſible for God to be *pleaſed* or *diſpleaſed* with any agent, for *barely giving* or *with-holding* his aſſent to this or any other propoſition; this aſſent being the effect of judgment, and not of choice (as I obſerved above) man being ſo far *paſſive* in the preſent caſe, as that, if he attends to the ſubject, he cannot think and judge otherwiſe of it than he does. And,

As

As error cannot, in the nature of the thing, lay a juſt foundation for divine reſentment, ſo much leſs ought it to be the occaſion of *diſpleaſure* to *men*, with regard to one another; ſeeing it is what all men are involved in, or at leaſt they cannot be certain of the contrary. For tho' no man thinks himſelf in an error in any point, yet if he has a grain of modeſty in him, he will admit that this *may* poſſibly be his caſe in one inſtance or other, tho' he ſees it not. And therefore for men to be *angry* with, and to *grieve* and *afflict* one another for their *different opinions*, in any caſe whatever, is moſt *unreaſonable* and *cruel*, and is plainly repugnant to that common golden rule, of *doing to all others as we would they ſhould do unto us*. If error did draw forth *divine diſpleaſure*, and men would be plunged into endleſs miſery in another world for its ſake, then, indeed, there would be ſome *ſhew* of reaſon for perſecution, and for taking away mens lives upon the account of it; as the leſs evil of a few is preferable to the much greater evil of many others. For tho' puniſhment is not a proper means of *conviction*, yet it may be urged, that, in this caſe, it is neceſſary to guard and ſecure the *common good*. The robber is executed, not to work a conviction in him that robbery is an error or a crime, but becauſe by robbery he is become injurious to the preſent common happineſs. So, in like manner, if error were *damnable*, then he that propagates it, muſt be allowed to be (tho' not intentionally, yet eventually) a *common enemy* to the future happineſs of mankind. And tho' taking away ſuch a man's life would be to him a great injury, yet it may be urged, that it would be neceſſary for the common ſafety; juſt as when a fire breaks forth, the pulling down one man's houſe is neceſſary to ſave the burning of the town. But

then

then it muſt be remembered, that if this be the caſe, there would be, as I obſerved above, an *abſolute neceſſity* of an *infallible judge*, whom every man could have free recourſe to, and receive from him an abſolute and certain determination of the caſe in every diſputable point whatever; for otherwiſe mankind would lie under the greateſt *hardſhip* poſſible. And, therefore, the Church of *Rome*, how contrary ſoever ſhe acts to the chriſtian religion, yet ſhe ſtill preſerves a kind of *conſiſtency with herſelf*; ſhe perſecutes, as aforeſaid, but then ſhe inſiſts that thoſe errors are *damnable* which ſhe perſecutes for, and that there is with her an infallible living judge to *guard* and *ſecure* men from thoſe errors; and that when this becomes ineffectual, and error takes place, then ſhe perſecutes merely out of *neceſſity*, thereby to prevent the propagation of this evil, and as a proper expedient to prevent the future endleſs miſery of mankind. So that, as I ſaid before, if error were damnable, then there would be ſome *ſhew* of reaſon for religious perſecution. But if it were admitted, that perſecution will follow, as a juſt conſequence from the aforeſaid principle, *viz.* that error is damnable, yet it is by no means to be *juſtified*: Becauſe,

Firſt, He that perſecutes is not conſtituted an *infallible judge*, and ſo is not qualified to give an abſolute and certain determination in any diſputable point of faith; and therefore perſecution muſt be *wrong*, let it come from what quarter ſoever. It is true, the Church of *Rome*, in order to juſtify herſelf in this caſe, pretends to be infallible; but this is only pretended, and not *proved*; therefore ſhe is not *juſtified* by this pretence, but, on the contrary, all her perſecutions may be juſtly charged upon her as *crimes*. Again,

Secondly,

Secondly, Perſecution is not juſtifiable, becauſe the forementioned principle is *falſe* upon which it is founded. For as nothing can be juſtly eſteemed *criminal*, but a *wilful* chuſing to do evil, when it is in our power to chuſe and do the contrary, or a wilful chuſing to omit doing that good which is in our own power to do; and as error is only a defect in the *underſtanding*, and in which the will is not concerned; ſo, conſequently, error, in any point whatever, cannot lay a *juſt foundation* for divine diſpleaſure; and, if ſo, then it cannot be a juſt ground for *perſecution*.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that tho' error, conſidered as an act of the underſtanding, be not criminal; yet when mens underſtandings are *miſled* by their *vicious inclinations*, then the errors, which they fall into, become criminal, becauſe, if they had not *indulged* their vicious inclinations, their underſtandings would not have been miſled, and conſequently they would not have fallen into ſuch errors. I *anſwer*, whatever viciouſneſs there is in men, that muſt, in the nature of the thing, be criminal, in itſelf, and diſpleaſing to Almighty God; and if ſuch viciouſneſs ſhould, in any inſtance, be the *ground* * and *cauſe* of error, ſuch error would not hereby become criminal; becauſe the *fault* in this caſe, does not lie in man's *error*, which is the effect, but only in his *indulging* his vicious inclinations, which was the *ground* and *cauſe* of that error; and becauſe a man's *vices* will render him equally criminal, and diſpleaſing to Almighty God, whether thoſe vices are *introductive* to any error, or not. The caſe is the ſame, whether error be the produce of *ſloth*, *bigotry*, or the

* *By viciouſneſs being the ground and cauſe of error*, I mean, when a man's vicious inclinations biaſs his judgment (tho' he diſcerns it not) and diſpoſes him to lean to one ſide of the queſtion rather than to the other.

like;

like; in which caſes, a man's miſtakes are not his crimes, becauſe, whatever criminalneſs he may be chargeable with, it ariſes from his *refuſing* or *neglecting* to make uſe of the means which he might and could have made uſe of, to bring him to the knowledge of the truth. I ſay, whatever in ſuch a caſe is criminal in a man, it muſt, in the nature of the thing, *conſiſt in*, and be *confined* to that wherein his *will* is concerned, that is, wherein he chuſes to do what he might and ought to have avoided, or chuſes to avoid what he might and ought to have done. Error, or a wrong judgment, being ſtrictly and properly the act of the underſtanding, and in which the will is not concerned (it being impoſſible, in the nature of the thing, for a man to *chuſe* to err) it cannot poſſibly have in it the nature of a crime; and therefore, how *faulty* ſoever men be that are in error, when they neglect or refuſe to make uſe of the means proper for their conviction, their errors cannot be *juſtly charged* upon them as their *crimes*, but their faultineſs muſt ariſe from ſomething wherein their *wills* are concerned, as I obſerved above.

If it ſhould be farther urged, that men are not perſecuted for their errors conſidered as errors, but for their *obſtinacy* and *perverſeneſs* which led them into thoſe errors, and which is the cauſe of their perſiſting in them: I *anſwer*, admitting that ſuch obſtinacy and perverſeneſs *may* be juſtly chargeable upon ſome men, yet it cannot be a *juſt ground* for perſecution; becauſe, *firſt*, no man can be a *judge* who is juſtly chargeable with ſuch obſtinacy, and who not. The ſprings of action are ſo far a *ſecret* locked up in every man's own breaſt, that one man cannot be an *abſolute* and *infallible judge*, what are the ſprings and cauſe of action to any other man; and therefore, if one man charges

obſtinacy

obſtinacy and perverſeneſs upon another man, as the *ground* and *cauſe* of *error* in him; in ſuch a caſe, he takes upon him to determine a point, which he cannot poſſibly be a judge of. The caſe is the ſame, if we conſider *vicious inclinations* as the ground and cauſe of error; for tho' this *may* poſſibly be the caſe, in ſome inſtances, yet it is what no *man*, or *body of men*, can be a judge of, to or for any other man; and therefore no man, or body of men, can have a *right* to judge of the *ground* and *cauſe* of error, except he, or they, be conſtituted an *infallible judge*, to give an abſolute and certain determination of the caſe; which no man, or body of men, can *prove* themſelves to be. Again, *ſecondly*, error, in the caſes here referred to, cannot be a *juſt ground* for perſecution, becauſe tho' it might be a *misfortune* to the erroneous perſon himſelf, yet it is no way *injurious* to the preſent or future *happineſs* of mankind. If a man ſhould be in an error, and if his error ſhould ſpring either from his *obſtinacy* or his *vicious inclinations*, the caſe would be juſt the ſame to the reſt of mankind, as if it had ſprung from the moſt *careful enquiry* poſſible; ſo that their happineſs and well-being, as to this world and the next, would not be affected by it. And therefore to *afflict* and *puniſh* a man for erring, as aforeſaid, would be to do what we have no *authority* for, and therefore would be *unjuſtifiable*. The caſe is the ſame, whether error relates to this or that *point* of faith, or to the *rule* of faith itſelf; that is, as chriſtians cannot be *juſtified* in treating one another ill, for their different opinions, with reſpect to the *chriſtian religion*; ſo neither can *chriſtians* or *infidels* be juſtified in perſecuting one another, for their different apprehenſions, with regard to the *divinity* of the chriſtian revelation. For as chriſtians cannot, in the nature of the thing, have

a *right*

a *right* of *dominion* over unbelievers, ſo as to *demand* their aſſent to this propoſition, *viz.* that the goſpel of Chriſt is a *divine revelation*; nor to *puniſh* them for *with-holding* their aſſent, when the evidence propoſed is not ſufficient to work their conviction; ſo, on the other ſide, the unbelievers cannot, in the nature of the thing, have a *right* of *dominion* over believers, ſo as to *prohibit* their aſſent, when the evidence produced, for the *divinity* of the chriſtian revelation, is ſufficient for their conviction. So that perſecution is equally *unreaſonable*, and *cruel*, and therefore is *unjuſtifiable* on either ſide.

If it ſhould be farther urged, that tho' error is not criminal in itſelf, yet it may be attended with ſuch *conſequences* as are *injurious* to mankind, that is, mens errors may lead them into ſuch *practices* as are *hurtful* to their neighbours, and therefore ſuch errors ought to be *reſtrained*. I *anſwer*, that as the *end* of government is to *guard* and *ſecure* the common good, ſo it muſt be the *buſineſs* and *duty* of governours to prevent and hinder men from *injuring* one another, by making ſuch laws as are proper to ſecure *mens perſons*, *properties*, and *reputation*, and to execute thoſe laws by *puniſhing tranſgreſſors*. But then it will by no means follow, that men are to be puniſhed, *antecedent* to their faults, and upon a *preſumption* that one time or other they will be guilty of them; which is the preſent caſe. When men perform ſuch actions as are injurious to the *commonwealth*, it is the buſineſs of governours to *correct* and *reſtrain* them, whether thoſe actions are the effect of *error*, or whether they ſpring from any other *cauſe*. But then the *ground* and *reaſon* of ſuch correction is evidently this, *viz.* the hurtfulneſs of the *actions themſelves*, and not the *right* or the *wrong* judgment of the performer, which may be the ground

or

or reaſon of them. A man's wrong judgment, in any point, cannot *hurt* or *injure* his neighbours, till it be reduced to *practice*; and, therefore, till it be reduced to practice, it cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the proper object of *reſentment*; and conſequently it cannot render the man the *proper object* of correction. Suppoſe a man ſhould be of opinion that there is no ſuch thing as *property*, and conſequently that he has as *good* a *title* to poſſeſs and enjoy what his neighbour is legally poſſeſſed of as the poſſeſſor. This opinion is as *dangerous*, with regard to its conſequences, as any; and yet, whilſt it continues *barely* an *opinion*, or an act of the man's judgment only, it is not *injurious* or *hurtful* to any; and therefore to *puniſh* a man, for being of ſuch an opinion, would be to puniſh in a caſe, where there is no *fault* or *injury* done, and conſequently to puniſh where there is no *juſt ground* for it. But if a man of this principle ſhould take the liberty to break in upon his neighbour's *property*, and ſhould *erroneouſly* think himſelf *innocent* in ſo doing, he would be the object of *publick reſentment* and *correction*; becauſe he breaks in upon the publick *tranquillity*, which it is the *buſineſs* of government to *guard* and *ſecure*. And in this caſe it is not a man's error, but his *injurious actions*, which render him *worthy* of puniſhment, ſuch actions being always to be *prevented* and *guarded* againſt, let them ſpring from what *motive* or *principle* ſoever. And therefore, as on the one ſide a man ought not to be *puniſhed* for his opinion, tho' erroneous, becauſe his errors in judgment are not injurious nor hurtful to any; ſo, on the other ſide, if his error ſhould lead him to *actions* which are hurtful to his neighbours, he ought to come under a *publick reſtraint*; not becauſe he errs, but becauſe he performs ſuch actions as are *hurtful* to others,

others, and are equally *as hurtful*, when they ſpring from *error*, as when they ſpring from any other cauſe. And,

As error ought to *ſcreen* a man from correction, when he performs ſuch actions as are hurtful to his neighbours; ſo when error relates to the *perſonal character* or *property* of others, and the publication of it is, *in itſelf*, *injurious*, then ſuch publication ought to be *reſtrained*. Suppoſe one man ſhould *erroneouſly* think another man to be a *thief*, or a *knave*, or that the preſent government is *illegal*, and that it ought to be taken out of the hands in which it is lodged, and to be put into the hands of others; in either of theſe caſes, the *publication* of error is *hurtful*, as it is a breaking in upon the *perſonal character* and *property* of others, which it is the buſineſs of government to guard and ſecure. And tho', in the latter caſe, the government is not *unhinged* by ſuch publications, yet every ſuch action is a *ſtep towards it*, and therefore it ought to be *reſtrained*; it being as fit that governours ſhould guard and ſecure their *own rights* and *poſſeſſions*, as the rights and poſſeſſions of thoſe they are governours to. But, tho' the publication of error is to be reſtrained, when ſuch publication relates to the perſonal character or property of others, and is itſelf injurious and hurtful; yet it will, by no means, follow, that it is the buſineſs and duty of governours to reſtrain the publication of *all errors* whatever. On the contrary, it is the buſineſs and duty of governours to *guard* and *defend* men from injury in the *publication* of their errors, except the publication itſelf be *injurious* and *hurtful*, as aforeſaid; for as man is a *dependent creature*, deſigned for ſociety; and as the buſineſs of ſociety is principally carried on by mens *conveying* their *ideas* one to another; ſo it is the *buſineſs* and *duty* of governours to *guard* and

protect

protect men in ſo doing, whilſt that conveyance is not injurious nor hurtful to the reſt of mankind. Every erroneous perſon thinks he judges *rightly*, and that they are in the wrong who are contrary-minded to him; and as he is naturally diſpoſed to publiſh his opinions, and thereby to bring others to the knowledge of what *he apprehends* to be *truth*; ſo herein he ought, in reaſon, to be guarded and protected from *harm*, when the publication of his opinions is no way *iniurious* to the perſonal character or property of any. Again,

If it ſhould be further urged, that tho' *true religion*, or that duty which men owe to their *Creator*, and to their *fellow-creatures*, ariſes from the *relation* they ſtand to God, and to each other, and therefore muſt be *perpetually* and *invariably* the ſame in all ages and places; yet the *externals* of *religion*, or the forms or modes of worſhip, by which men pay their acknowledgments to God, are of an *indifferent nature*, and therefore may be *varied* as the circumſtances of things ſhall require; and as governours are the *guardians* of *humans happineſs*, ſo they ought to *appoint* forms of worſhip, and to *puniſh* thoſe who *diſſent* from them, and who pay their reſpect to God in a way different from what the government has appointed, becauſe ſuch diſſent introduces *diſorder*, and is *injurious* to ſociety.

I *anſwer*, That as government was deſigned for the *good* of *mankind*, by obliging each individual to pay that *debt* which (according to his condition and circumſtances in life) he owes to *ſociety*, and by guarding the *perſons*, the *reputations*, and the *properties* of men from being *injured* by each other; ſo governours ought to uſe all *proper means* for the attaining thoſe valuable ends. And as the appointing publick forms of worſhip, for men to pay their acknowledgments to God by, and perſons to miniſter therein, and to be conſtant monitors to ſtir up the people to their duty,

may be *ſubſervient* to the *publick good*; ſo, I think, it is right and fit that governours ſhould make ſuch a proviſion, that every one may have the *opportunity* to pay their publick acknowledgments to God, which the generality of mankind think it is their *duty* to do. But then as the duty which every mans owes to his Maker ariſes from that *relation* which he ſtands in to him, and as ſociety is no way *intereſted* therein; ſo, in the nature of the thing, he is not *anſwerable* to ſociety for the *performance* of that duty, or the *neglect* of it. If he worſhips God publickly, no man is a *gainer*; and, if he neglects it, no man is a *loſer* thereby. If he worſhips God *this way* or *that way*, whilſt no man is *injured* in his ſo doing, he *cannot*, in the nature of the thing, be the *proper object* of publick reſentment or correction.

The *ground* and *foundation* of ſociety, and conſequently of government, I take to be this; man is a dependent creature, who in a ſingle capacity is not qualified to *procure* the *comforts*, nor *guard* againſt the *evils* of life; ſo that he is not only from the *reaſon* of the thing, and from his *ſocial affections*, led into ſociety, but alſo from his *natural indigent* condition in life, is under a kind of neceſſity to fall into it, or of conſtituting a *publick intereſt*; by which means every individual is, or at leaſt ought to be obliged to perform his part towards the *ſupport* of the *whole*, and conſequently of each individual, which they, in their ſingle capacity, were not capable of doing for themſelves. And likewiſe by this means all proper meaſures are, or ought to be taken to *guard* and *ſecure* each individual from that *injury* and *harm* which they, in their ſingle capacity, are not qualified to ſecure themſelves from. And as governours are no other than the *miniſters* and *repreſentatives* of ſociety, who act for them, and in their

place

place and ſtead, ſo they *cannot*, in the nature of the thing, have any juſt *demand* upon an individual, except in thoſe caſes in which it is for the the *publick good*; neither can they juſtly lay a *reſtraint* upon an individual, but in thoſe caſes in which the *publick* is *injur'd*; and conſequently they can have no right, as governours, to *demand* the uſe of thoſe modes of worſhip which they provide, nor to *puniſh* men for *diſſenting* from them, becauſe the publick is not *benefited* by the former, nor *injured* by the latter. And,

Whereas it is urged, that *diſſent* from the forms of worſhip, which the government has appointed, introduces *diſorder*, and is *injurious* to ſociety; it muſt be granted, that there has been *difference* of opinions, with reſpect to the forms of worſhip among chriſtians; men have likewiſe *diſſented* from thoſe forms which the government has appointed; much *diſorder* has followed, and much *injury* has been done to ſociety hereby. But then it is to be remembered, that ſuch diſorder, *&c.* did not ſpring from a *liberty* of diſſent, but from a *reſtraint* of that liberty. If men were left perfectly at *liberty* to worſhip God in the way which every man *judged beſt*, no *diſorder* or *injury* to ſociety could poſſibly attend it, provided there was nothing in the *act* of *worſhip injurious* to others. If every particular *family* had a particular mode of worſhip, no one could be a *ſufferer* hereby, and conſequently no injury is done to *ſociety*. But, if governours reſtrain that liberty, by *puniſhing diſſenters*, then *every evil* follows. Men are then *afflicted* and *grieved* without any juſt *cauſe*; they are *tempted* to be *hypocrites*, to violate their *natural conſciences*; their *reſentment* is raiſed, and they are by this means *drawn* into *faults*, which otherwiſe they would not be guilty of. It likewiſe gives *evil-minded* men an opportunity of *inſulting*

and *triumphing* over their perſecuted neighbours, of loading them with *reproach*, and taking every opportunity of adding to their *burden*. It would be endleſs to enumerate all the *evils* which attend the *reſtraint* of liberty in this caſe. Add to this, that the diſorders and injuries done to *ſociety*, here referr'd to, did not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, ſpring from men's *different* religious opinions, or modes of worſhip, but from that *worldly wealth*, and *authority* to direct the underſtandings and conſciences of men, which have been *tacked* to them, and which the *leaders* of each party have been too apt to *aſſume* to themſelves. If no worldly *advantage* or *diſadvantage* had attended men's religious opinions, or modes of worſhip, which in *reaſon* ought not, then, I imagine the diſputes about *epiſcopacy* and *presbytery*, about *forms* and *extemporary prayer*, and the like, would not have been *injurious* or *hurtful* to mankind; but when *honours*, *large poſſeſſions*, and *authority* are tacked to this or that ſet of opinions, or this or that mode of worſhip, this has proved a powerful *temptation* to each party to make uſe of all methods, how unjuſtifiable ſoever, to *gain* or *ſecure* them; and this has introduced a world of *evils* and *miſery* upon mankind. It is not enough to ſay, in this caſe, that it were *better* if all men did worſhip God in the ſame way, becauſe then there would be *no place* for contention upon this foot. For admitting this to be *true*, yet it is what is not to be *expected*; and to attempt to procure it by *perſecution* is to make uſe of a *deſperate remedy*, indeed, a remedy a thouſand times worſe than the diſeaſe; a remedy, which as already done ſo much *miſchief* in the world, that one would think every *good man* ſhould *tremble* at the thoughts of it. But farther,

If there ſhould be urged, in favour of perſecution, ſuch texts as theſe, *Matt.* xv. 13. *Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, ſhall be rooted up.* I *anſwer*, I ſhall not take upon me to enquire into the *ſenſe* of thoſe words of Chriſt, or of any other text in which men think that perſecution is *countenanced*; all I ſhall obſerve is this, that each religious party will be ſure to interpret them in their *own favour*, and to the *prejudice* of thoſe who are contrary-minded to them. And from hence it will follow, that if thoſe words are a *proper argument*, and the ground and reaſon for *perſecution* to one ſect of chriſtians, then they will be ſo to every other ſect. And this, indeed, would make good, in a literal ſenſe, thoſe other words of Chriſt, that *he came not to bring peace on the earth, but a ſword*; becauſe this would lay a *foundation* for a *thorough perſecution*, and *Chriſtendom* would become a *field* of *blood*. The *Papiſts*, of courſe, will conſider themſelves to be the *vineyard* which the *Lord* hath *planted*, and that all other ſects and parties of chriſtians are plants which their heavenly Father hath not planted, and which, therefore, are to be *rooted* up. The caſe will be the ſame, with reſpect to Proteſtants; the *epiſcopal* party will conſider themſelves as *branches* of *God's planting*, and that all other ſects are plants which their heavenly Father hath not planted, and therefore are to be rooted up. The *Preſbyterians* will likewiſe, of courſe, conſider themſelves as *branches* of the *Lord's planting*, and that all others are plants which their heavenly Father hath not planted, and therefore to be rooted up. This language and reaſoning will ſuit *Independants*, *Anabaptiſts*, *Quakers*, *Muggletonians*, and all other *ſects* and *parties* of chriſtians whatever; they are, each of them, in their *own eſtimation*, the branch of God's planting, the work of his

hand; whereas all others are plants which their heavenly Father hath not planted, and therefore are to be rooted up. In ſhort, this is ſuch language and reaſoning as will ſuit all parties, and all countries, as well *North* and *South-Britain*, as *Spain* or *Portugal*: every man may gird his ſword upon his thigh, and go forth in the *name* and *ſtrength* of the *Lord* his *God*, and ſtay till he has laid heap upon heap, becauſe *every plant which his heavenly Father hath not planted, is to be plucked up root and branch.* Thus ſtands the caſe, if perſecution be admitted upon ſuch *reaſoning*, as above. But can ſo *vile* a thing as perſecution, which introduces nothing but *miſery* into this world, and which anſwers *no good end*, with relation to another; Can that, I ſay, be *juſtified*, or ſo much as *countenanced* from the *religion* of *Chriſt?* no, certainly. The chriſtian religion is excellently calculated to promote the common tranquility, by recommending *peace*, *unanimity*, *forbearance*, *brotherly kindneſs*, and *univerſal charity* to our practice. Yea, it recommends *loving* and *doing good*, and contributing all we can to each other's *happineſs* in *this world*, as the *only ſure way* to obtain the happineſs of another; and therefore one would think it above the ſkill of the moſt ſubtle ſophiſter, to extract *the deadly poiſon* of perſecution from it. And yet, how *monſtrous* and *unnatural* ſoever this may be, it has proved true in fact; chriſtians have not only perſecuted, but they have likewiſe endeavour'd to *juſtify* their *conduct* herein, from the *chriſtian revelation*; which, were it not for the commonneſs of it, would be too ſurprizing a thing to be imagined. Upon the whole I hope it appears that *error* is not *damnable*, and that *perſecution* is not *juſtifiable*.

The uſe I would make of this diſcourſe is to obſerve, that as *perſecution* is an *evil thing* and

bitter,

bitter, and which can by no means be *juſtified*, as I have before ſhewn; ſo it is high time that it were *baniſhed* out of the *chriſtian world*. Alas! How many weeping eyes and aching hearts has it *cauſleſly* produced, and how many precious lives have been ſacrificed as *victims* to it? Is it not, then, full time for chriſtians to think with themſelves, that perſecution is not a *beauty*, but a *blemiſh* to their profeſſion? and that as their obligation to *love*, and *do good* to each other, ariſes from their being *men*, who are, by nature, entered into the one *great ſociety*, or commonwealth of mankind; ſo it is not their different opinions in any point, which can poſſibly *cancel* or take off this obligation? And, as perſecution is exceeding vile in itſelf, ſo it does not *change its nature* from the different hands thro' which it paſſes; it continues the ſame in all *countries*, in all *parties*, and in all *perſons*, tho' it is, indeed, *leſs excuſable* in ſome than in others, as being more inconſiſtent with ſome mens principles, than with other mens. And thus perſecution is leſs excuſable in a *Proteſtant* than in a *Papiſt*, as I have ſhewn above. And tho' ſome men are apt to ſee it in a *different light*, when they view it in another party, than when they ſee it in their own, it being *gilded* over, and called by another *name* in the latter caſe; yet it is not really another, but the ſame thing. The *afflicting* and *grieving* men, for the ſake of their *religious principles*, is perſecution, whether it be in *Poland* or in *Britain*; and therefore it ought to be equally *deteſted* by us. The many cruelties practiſed by the *Roman Catholicks* have often *deeply affected* the proteſtant world, and made every tender heart to bleed; and yet *Proteſtants* have been too apt to *cheriſh* that *viper* in their *own boſoms*, which, when ſeen at a diſtance preying upon

others, raiſes in them ſo much *horror* and *indignation*. And, as perſecution does not change its nature, from the different hands by which it is executed, ſo neither is it leſs perſecution, by reaſon of the *different way*, or the *different degree* in which it is practiſed. The afflicting and grieving men, for the ſake of their opinions, is perſecution, in *what way*, or in *what degree* ſoever it takes place. He that makes his neighbour's *differing* from him, in opinion, the *ground* and reaſon of his contributing to his *unhappineſs*, is guilty of perſecution, whether he afflicts him in this or that way, or to a greater or leſs degree. Perſecution in its *notorious inſtances* (ſuch as the cruelties of the *inquiſition*, the maſſacres of *France* or *Ireland*, the burnings of *Smithfield*, the executions at *Thorn*, and the like) is exceeding *ſhocking* to human nature, as it makes a deep impreſſion upon the more tender part of our compoſition, *viz.* our affections, and thereby chills our blood, when we reflect upon it. And as the *greater inſtances* only *deeply affect* us, and ſtrike us with *horror*; ſo ſome men are apt to think that theſe only are *vile*, and come under the name of *perſecution*; whereas every *injury*, done to our neighbour, for the ſake of his *religious principles*, is perſecution, and has the ſame *natural vileneſs*, of what degree ſoever it be. It ſprings from the ſame *root*, and would, if *indulged*, carry men to the higheſt *ſeverities*. The ſame ſpirit which diſpoſes one man to bring another before the judgment-ſeat, in order to have him *fined or impriſoned*, for his advancing a propoſition which contradicts another propoſition that had been advanced before, would, if indulged, diſpoſe him to hale the other to *execution*, tho', poſſibly, it is what at firſt he did not intend. If thoſe men who are for *moderate perſecution*, as ſome call it, ſhould be told, that the time would come in

which

which they would imbrue their hands in the *blood* of their *innocent neighbours*, they would be apt to cry out with *Hazael*, *Am I a dog, that I ſhould do this great wickedneſs?* And yet the ſame *motive*, and the ſame *ſpirit* which diſpoſed them to the *leſs*, would, if followed effectually, lead them on to do the *greater evil*.

Is it then not high time for *chriſtians*, of all denominations whatever, to put on the *ſpirit* of *chriſtianity*, by putting on that ſpirit and temper which abundantly ſhewed itſelf in him whoſe *name* they bear? The ſpirit of Chriſt is a ſpirit of *love*, and *love worketh no ill to its neighbour*. And as our being animated by this ſpirit is what will be an *evidence* to us that we are Chriſt's true *Diſciples*; ſo this will be ſuch an *antidote* as will effectually expel and purge out of us the *poiſonous ſpirit* of *perſecution*. Perſecution is of a *growing nature*; and, when once it breaks out, we cannot poſſibly judge where it will ſtop; and, therefore, we ought carefully to guard againſt all *approaches* to it, which will be effectually done by ſubjecting our *tempers* and *actions* to Chriſt's law of love. And, as we ought to purge out every thing that may diſpoſe us to perſecution, ſo we ought, from the reaſon of the thing, to uſe our endeavours to *check* and *controul* it, *when* or *wherever* it appears. Perſecution is a *deadly evil*, which every heart and every hand ſhould be engaged to *baniſh* from this world. We are all, by nature, united in the one *great ſociety*, or commonwealth of mankind; and tho' we are divided into *kingdoms*, *nations*, &c. which are parts and branches of that one great ſociety; yet our *union* with *one part* does not deſtroy our relation, nor take off our obligations to the reſt. We are, by nature, ſo far made *guardians* of each other's *happineſs*, as that it becomes our *duty*, when their neceſſity calls, and our ability enables, to *miniſter* aſſiſtance

aſſiſtance and ſuccour to them. Let then every *Proteſtant*, every *chriſtian*, every *man* put forth his endeavour to ſuppreſs and baniſh, as a *common evil*, perſecution from this globe. But,

O Happy, thrice happy *Britain!* ſhe ſitteth as a *Queen* among the nations, and as a *Princeſs* among the provinces, and knows no *ſuch ſorrow*, being under the guardianſhip of a Prince *, whoſe reign has not been been polluted and ſtained with the *blood* of *perſecution*, and I truſt will not; a Prince who has hitherto not only made *Britain's enemies* to be at *peace* with her, but has kept her alſo from offering *violence to herſelf*, and from thruſting a dagger into her own breaſt; which is the caſe of perſecution. Her children, tho' *differing* much in their religious ſentiments (which, poſſibly, is the caſe all the world over, where men have not *padlocks* put upon their *underſtandings*) may every one ſit down under his own vine, and under his fig-tree, enjoying the fruits of their own labour, and have none to make them *afraid*. In her the ſons of *violence* cannot hurt; and, by the bleſſing of a good government, the *lioniſh*, *wolfiſh ſpirit*, which is *greedy* of *prey*, and *longs* to *devour*, is made peaceably to lie down with the *lamb*, yea, the *kid*, the *fatling*, and the *young lion* lie down together. O *Britain!* may *ſuch peace* long continue within thy walls, and plenteouſneſs within thy palaces; and may thy *happy days* be lengthened out to many generations; be thou as a city, that is at *unity* in itſelf, whoſe members are cemented together by the *ſpirit* of *love*. Let thy *virtue* and *goodneſs* render thee amiable in the ſight of the nations; and let thy glory ſhine forth as the *ſun* at noon-day. May thy *guardian angel* long continue to be ſuch; let him not go down to the grave. till he hath filled up a *good old age*,

* K. *George* I.

and

and be gathered to his fathers as a ſhock of corn that is *full ripe*. May the *Princes* that ſpring out of his loins be *Britain*'s *Protectors* to our lateſt poſterity. And, O that it may be a *diadem* in their *crown*, that they have anſwered the purpoſes of government, by *guarding* and *ſecuring* the happineſs of this people. And may every deſign formed againſt *them*, or *Britain*'s *proſperity*, be *blaſted* and brought to nought. But, can there be any man who can *wiſh* the removal of *ſuch a government*, whilſt they happily live under the *protection* of it? If any ſuch there are, as they muſt be *monſters* in *nature*, ſo I truſt their number is but *ſmall*. We are guarded from *enemies abroad*, and kept in the quiet poſſeſſion of every *bleſſing at home*, which government was deſigned to *ſecure to us*. And what farther can we wiſh for? Not, ſurely, for the return of a *Popiſh Pretender*, becauſe that is to wiſh the *return of popery*, the *return of miſery*. Popery is an engine fitted to *deſtroy* and *lay waſte* the happineſs of mankind, by introducing *oppreſſion*, *tyranny*, and *perſecution*. Can then any man, who wiſhes *Britain*'s glory and happineſs, deſire the removal of that *Prince*, that *family* from the throne, which are our *only ſecurity*? And can he wiſh for the placing a *Popiſh Pretender* in their ſtead? No, that is an apparent *contradiction*; every ſuch perſon being, in the nature of the thing, an *enemy* to *Britain*'s *happineſs*.

To conclude, let *perſecution* ceaſe; and be no more heard of, either in *Britain* or in this *world*. And let *peace* and *tranquillity* flouriſh and prevail in *this* and in *all lands*. And then the gracious purpoſe of our kind Creator will be fully anſwered, in the *common felicity* of his creatures; to which I am perſuaded every good man will ſay, *Amen*.

TRACT

TRACT XXIII.

AN

EXAMINATION

OF

Mr. *BARCLAY*'s Principles,

With Regard to Man's natural Ability ſince the fall;

As laid down in his Book, entitled, *An Apology for the true Chriſtian Divinity, as the ſame is held forth and preached by the People called, in Scorn, Quakers.* Wherein is ſhewn, That the ſaid Principles are *erroneous*, and in which *Human Nuture* is vindicated from that Burden of Reproach he has loaded it with. In a Letter to Friend, occaſion'd by the great Commendation given to Mr. *Barclay*'s Performance, in the *Britiſh Journal*, No XXX. and now offered to the Conſideration of the People called *Quakers*.

SIR,

AS the great commendation given to Mr. *Barclay*'s performance, in the *Britiſh Journal*, awakened your curioſity, and diſpos'd you to buy the book; and as your reading it induced you to put it into my hands, that I might give you my opinion of that performance; ſo I have, in juſtice to truth, ſent you

you my thoughts of it, in this publick way. For tho' the book has been publiſh'd many years, and the author is long ſince dead, and ſo the takeing notice of it, in this way, may have the appearance of unfairneſs; yet, ſeeing it has been lately ſo highly commended, in a publick news-paper; when this, is conſider'd, that colour of unfairneſs which otherwiſe my examing it might be liable to, I think, is taken away.

The *Britiſh Journal*, Saturday, *April* 13, 1723. *Numb.* XXX. gives the the following character of Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme and performance. "I "am not aſham'd to own, that I have, with "great pleaſure read over Mr. *Barclay*'s Apo- "logy for Quakeriſm, and do really think it "to be the moſt maſterly, charitable, and rea- "ſonable ſyſtem, that I have ever ſeen. It ſolves "the numerous difficulties, rais'd by other ſects, "and, by turns, thrown at one another; ſhews "all parts of the ſcripture to be uniform and "conſiſtent; and as Sir *Iſaac* Newton, by allow- "ing him gravitation, has accounted for all the "phænomena of nature; ſo if we allow Mr. "*Barclay* thoſe operations of the ſpirit, which "the Quakers pretend to feel, and which, he "ſays every man in the world has, and may "feel, if he watches its motions, and does not "ſuppreſs them; then, I think, all the jangling "vain queſtions, numerous, ſuperſtitious, and "various oppreſſions, which have plagued the "world from the beginning, would ceaſe, and "be at an end."

I ſhall not concern myſelf, with what this author has ſaid of Mr. *Barclay*'s book; my intent not being to oppoſe him, but only to take the ſame liberty, in giving my opinion of that performance, as he has done. I ſhall, indeed, proceed one ſtep farther than this author, *namely*,

not

not only give my opinion, but likewiſe ſhew, upon what grounds that opinion is founded, as will appear in the following lines. And if I ſhould, in any particular, differ from him, I am perſuaded I ſhall not offend; preſuming he will allow, that I have an equal right to diſſent from him in my opinion, and to publiſh the grounds of that diſſent, as he has to diſſent from me. I ſhall likewiſe conſider Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme, and performance, what it is in itſelf, and not what it is, when compar'd with other ſyſtems and performances. Theſe things being premis'd, I proceed to obſerve, that, I have likewiſe read Mr, *Barclay*'s book, and do really think it contains a *confus'd, abſurd ſcheme of religion*; in which God is conſider'd, as dealing with his creatures, not according to the *moral fitneſs of things*, but from *arbritary pleaſure.*' For tho' the author ſometimes brings *Juſtice, goodneſs, truth*, &c. into the caſe, and argues from theſe, and, conſequently, reaſons from the fitneſs of things, when it turns to the advantage of his argument; yet this is what his ſcheme, upon the whole, will not comport with, but muſt be *overthrown* by. However, I ſhall not enter into a particular examination of all the propoſitions, laid down in the book referr'd to; but ſhall ſingle out one, upon which, I think, Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme has an apparent dependence.

PROPOSITION IV.

Concerning the Condition of Man in the Fall.

" *All* Adam's *poſterity, or mankind, both* Jew, " *and* Gentile, *as to the firſt* Adam, *or earthly* " *man, is fallen, degenerate, and dead*; *depriv'd of* " *the ſenſation, or feeling of this* inward teſtimo- " ny, *or* ſeed of God; *and is ſubject to the power,*

nature,

" *nature, and ſeed of the ſerpent, which he ſoweth in* " *men's hearts, whilſt they abide in this natural and* " *corrupted eſtate. From whence it cometh, that not* " *only their words, and deeds, but all their imagina-* " *tions are evil perpetually in the ſight of God, as pro-* " *ceeding from this depraved and wicked ſeed. Man,* " *therefore, as he is in this ſtate, can know nothing* " *aright; yea, his thoughts and conceptions concern-* " *ing* God, *and things* ſpiritual (*until he be disjoin'd* " *from the evil ſeed, and united to the divine light*) " *are unprofitable both to himſelf, and others.*

" That, then, which our propoſition leads to " treat of, is,

" *Firſt*, What the condition of man is in the " fall, and how far uncapable of meddling in the " things of God.

" So that, tho' we do not aſcribe any part of *A-* " *dam*'s guilt to men, until they make it theirs, " by like acts of diſobedience; yet we cannot " ſuppoſe, that men, who are come of *Adam* na- " turally, can have any good thing in their na- " ture, as belonging to it, which he, from " whom they derive their nature, had not him- " ſelf to communicate unto them.

" If, then, we may affirm, that *Adam* did not " retain in his nature, as belonging thereunto, " any will, or light, capable to give him know- " ledge in ſpiritual things; then, neither can his " poſterity. For whatſoever real good any man " doth, it proceedeth not from his nature, as he " is a man, or the ſon of *Adam*; but from the " *ſeed of God in him*, as a new viſitation of life, " in order to bring him out of this natural con- " dition; ſo that tho' it be in him, yet it is not " of him. And this the Lord himſelf witneſ- " ſeth, *Gen.* vi. 5. where it is ſaid, *He ſaw that* " *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was* " *only evil continually.* Which words, as they are

" very

" very poſitive, ſo are they very comprehenſive; " obſerve the emphaſis of them. *Firſt*, There is " *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart*; ſo " that this admits of no exception, of any ima- " gination of the thoughts of his heart. Se- " condly, *is only evil continually*. It is neither in " *ſome part evil continually*, nor yet *only* evil at *ſome* " *times*; but both *only* evil, and *always*, and *con-* " *tinually* evil; which certainly excludes any good, " as a proper effect of man's heart naturally; for " that which is only evil, and that always cannot, " of its own nature, produce any good thing. " The Lord expreſſeth this again a little after, " *Chap.* viii. 21. *The imagination of man's heart* " *is evil from his youth*; thus, inferring how na- " tural and proper it is unto him. From which " I thus argue,

" If the thoughts of man's heart be not only " evil, but always evil; then, are they, as they " ſimply proceed from his heart, neither good in " part, nor at any time:

" But the firſt is true, therefore, the laſt.

" Again,

" If man's thoughts be always and only evil; " then, are they altogether uſeleſs and ineffectual " to him in the things of God:

" But the firſt is true, therefore, the laſt.

" *Secondly*, This appears plainly, from that " ſaying of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, Chap. xvii. 9. " *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſpe-* " *rately wicked.* For who can, with any colour " of reaſon, imagine that that, which is ſo, can " have any power, of itſelf, or is any way fit to " lead a man to righteouſneſs; whereunto it is, " of its own nature, directly oppoſite? This is as " contrary to reaſon, as it is impoſſible in nature, " that a ſtone, of its own nature, and proper " motion, ſhould fly upwards. For as a ſtone,

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" of its own nature inclineth, and is prone to " move downward, towards the center; ſo the " heart of man is naturally prone, and inclined " to evil; ſome to one, and ſome to another.

" From this, then, I alſo thus argue:

" That which is *deceitful above all things. and* " *deſperately wicked*, is not fit, neither can it lead " a man aright in things that are good and ho- " neſt:

" But the heart of man is ſuch,

" Therefore, *&c.*

" But the Apoſtle *Paul* deſcribes the condition " of man, in the fall, at large, taking it out of " the Pſalmiſt; *There is none righteous, no not one*; " *there is none that underſtandeth, there is none that* " *ſeeketh after God. They are all gone out of the* " *way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there* " *is none that doth good, no not one. Their throat is* " *an open ſepulchre*; *with their tongues have they uſed* " *deceit*; *the poiſon of aſps is under their lips*; *whoſe* " *mouths are full of curſing and bitterneſs. Their feet* " *are ſwift to ſhed blood. Deſtruction and miſery are* " *in their ways*; *and the way of peace have they not* " *known*; *there is no fear of God before their eyes.* " What more poſitive can be ſpoken? He ſeem- " ed to be particularly careful to avoid, that any " good ſhould be aſcribed to the natural man. " He ſhews, how he is polluted in all his ways. " He ſhews, how he is void of righteouſneſs, of " underſtanding, of the knowledge of God; how " he is out of the way, and in ſhort unprofitable; " than which, nothing can be more fully ſaid, to " confirm our judgment. For, if this be the " condition of the natural man, or of man as he " ſtands in the fall, he is unfit to make one right " ſtep to heaven."

I have here ſet down, at large, that part of the *fourth* propoſition, which relates to the queſtion,

viz. whether there is ability, in the *natural man*, to know, and do, either *good* or *evil?* I have likewiſe recited what the author has offer'd, for the proof of the principles he has here laid down. And tho' he has expreſs'd himſelf very *darkly* and *confuſedly* upon the ſubject; yet, I think, upon the whole (that is, taking in the other branches of his ſcheme, and what he has ſaid in other parts of his book; and ſuppoſing he intended to be underſtood, and that there is a meaning and conſiſtency in his words) his ſenſe be will juſtly expreſſed, in the two following propoſitions.

PROPOSITION I.

Man, conſider'd as man, or that compound creature, conſiſting of underſtanding, of appetite, affection, &c. *which ſprang from* Adam, *as his original parent, has no power or ability, at any time, to think, ſpeak, or act that which is good.*

PROPOSITION II.

Man, conſider'd as man, or that creature compounded and derived, as aforeſaid, is neceſſarily determined, at all times, either by his own natural compoſition, or by the agency of the ſerpent, to think, ſpeak, and act that which is evil.

Before I proceed to examine theſe propoſitions, with regard to the *truth*, or *falſehood* of them, I find it is neceſſary to obſerve two or three things, in order to make the way clear before me. And,

Firſt, I obſerve, that as I have given what I judge to be the author's ſenſe, in the two precedent propoſitions; ſo I have expreſs'd it, in terms *much ſtronger* than thoſe he uſes. And the reaſon of it is this, *namely*, that I may reduce the controverſy into a narrow compaſs, by cutting off all occaſion for unneceſſary diſputes about words.

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And, in this, I think, I have done the author no *wrong*; becauſe he muſt intend to expreſs, in his *loſe* and *confuſed* way, what I expreſs more *ſtrongly* and *clearly*; or elſe his performance is but an *amuſement*, and he is fighting, without an adverſary. No, in order to clear this point, I ſay, either Mr. *Barclay* did intend to *aſſert* and *prove*, that man, in his natural capacity, has no power or ability, at any time, to think, ſpeak, or act that which is good; or he did *not* intend to aſſert and prove this. If he did not, then, man has natural ability, in himſelf, to know, and do what will pleaſe God, for any thing that this author has aſſerted, or proved to the *contrary*. So that, tho' *no man can come to the Father, but by the Son*, that is, but in that way in which the Son has declared it to be the will of the Father, that men ſhould come to him, *namely, by keeping God's commandments*, and by *repentence and amendment of life*; there being no other name, or way given among men, but this way given or declared by *Jeſus Chriſt*, by which they may be *ſaved*; yet they may come, *acceptably to God* without any *internal ſupernatural light or operation*. And, conſequently, there is not that *abſolute neceſſity* for ſuch a ſupernatural operation, in order to *man's ſalvation*, as Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme ſuppoſes; and, without ſuppoſing it, his performance is an amuſement. But if he did intend to *aſſert* and *prove*, that man has not natural ability to think, ſpeak, or act that which is good; then, my expreſſing ſtrongly what he expreſſed looſly can be no *injury* to his cauſe.

Poſſibly, the adherers to Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme may here take ſanctuary, under the covert of the term *ſpiritual*, and may reply, that tho' he did intend to aſſert and prove, that man has no ability in himſelf, at any time, to think, ſpeak, or act that which is *good*; yet he intended to confine the

term *good* to *ſpiritual things*, or things pertaining to the *favour* of *God*; ſtill allowing, that man has power and liberty, with regard to *temporal good*, or the good of this life; and that this is plainly the caſe, appears from this, and other parts of Mr. *Barclay*'s book.

I *anſwer*, That as men ſometimes *confound* things, by making that the *ſame*, which is really *diſtinct*; ſo they ſometimes make *diſtinctions*, where there are none. And thus it is in the preſent caſe: here are ſuppoſed two ſets of powers for the performance of good; one for *temporal*, and the other for *ſpiritual good things*. But this is a mere fiction, it being by one ſet of powers only, *viz.* the human compoſition, by which men perform *all good*, whether it relates to this life, or a better; and by which they pleaſe either men, or God. It is the ſame natural faculty of underſtanding, by which a man diſcerns and judges of the truth, or falſehood of theſe propoſitions, *viz.* that three times two is ſix; and that three angels of a right-lined triangle are equal to two rect-angels; and by which he diſcerns and judges of the truth or falſehood of the propoſitions and arguments laid down in Mr. *Barclay*'s book. And theſe, ſurely, will be allow'd to be *ſpiritual things*, ſeeing they are propoſed as an explanation, and vindication of the true *chriſtian divinity*. It is by the ſame natural paſſion of *fear*, that men are led to guard againſt the evils of this life, and of another. It is the ſame natural paſſion of *hope*, which excites men to proſecute their preſent or future happineſs. It is by the ſame natural power, that a man loves God and his neighbour; which is the *fulfilling of the law*, and which will render him *acceptable* to his *Maker*, and by which he loves any thing, that renders *this life* agreeable to him. Only the affection is exerciſed upon different objects, and to

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a different degree; and it becomes either virtuous, or vicious, as it is exercised upon a proper, or an improper object; or, as it is kept within, or is indulged beyond its due bounds. It is the same natural active faculty, or power of self-motion, by which a man uses the members of his body, to commit murder, or to save from death, or the like. The case is the same, with regard to all the parts of our composition, and with regard to all the good which is perform'd by us. And this leads me to request of those men, who *depretiate human nature*, by denying it any ability to do good, as aforesaid, to give a case, in which it will appear, that the natural man, as they express it, has not ability to perform any one branch of goodness, that will render him acceptable to his Maker.

If it should be farther urged, that I have not expressed what they intend by the term *spiritual*; my answer is, when they will please to explain this term, in an *intelligible* way, and shew what they intend by it, I shall then, and not till then, be able to reply. Again,

Either Mr. *Barclay* did intend to assert and prove, that man, consider'd as man, is necessarily determined, at all times, to think, speak, and act that which is evil; or he did not intend to assert and prove this. If he did not, then, man, in his natural state, has power, and is at liberty, not only to *do*, or *omit* doing evil; but also to *do*, or *omit* doing good; even as a man who has power, and is at liberty to tell a *lie*, must, in the nature of the thing, have power, and be equally at liberty to relate the *truth*, which is opposed to it. I say, if Mr. *Barclay* did not intend to assert and prove, as aforesaid; then, man, in his natural state, has power, and is at liberty to do good, or evil, for any thing that he has asserted,

or proved to the contrary. And, conſequently, there is not that *abſolute neceſſity* for an internal ſupernatural operation, in order to *man's ſalvation*, as Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme ſuppoſes; and, without ſuppoſing it, his performance is an impoſition upon his reader. But if he did intend to *aſſert* and *prove*, that man is, neceſſarily, determined to think, ſpeak, and act that which is evil; then my expreſſing ſtrongly what he expreſſed looſly can be no *injury* to his cauſe. Whoever examines, with care and impartiality, Mr. *Barclay*'s performance, I think, muſt grant, that his ſcheme ſuppoſes, and that, to appearance, he endeavours to maintain, that man has not natural ability to do good, and that he is, neceſſarily, determined to do evil; and that, in conſequence of this deplorable ſtate of the human nature, ſince the fall, he urges the *abſolute neceſſity* of an *internal ſupernatural light or operation*, in order to *man's ſalvation*. And, therefore, as I ſaid before, if he did not intend to aſſert and prove this, then, his performance is an amuſement, and he is miſleading his reader. But if he did intend to aſſert and prove, as aforeſaid, then, my reducing his ſenſe into two plain propoſitions, and expreſſing ſtrongly what he expreſſed looſly, and confuſedly, can be no injury to his cauſe. And, as impoſition, in the preſent caſe, is much *worſe* than ſimple error, or miſtake; ſo I ſhall, in favour to Mr. *Barclay*, ſuppoſe, or take it for granted, that he did intend to aſſert and prove, tho' erroneouſly, and innocently, what is laid down in the two foregoing propoſitions. Again,

Secondly, I obſerve that Mr. *Barclay* in treating of this ſubject, diſtinguiſhes betwixt the *natural man*, and the *ſeed* of the *ſerpent* in that man; and he aſcribes the evil, which man brings forth, ſometimes to one, and ſometimes to the other, as

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its *cauſe.* And as he thus varies, with regard to the cauſe of evil in man; ſo, when I expreſs his ſenſe of this point, as in the ſecond propoſition, I did not charge it upon the one, or the other; but expreſs'd it thus; *Man, conſider'd as man, or that creature compounded and derived, as aforeſaid, is neceſſarily determined, at all times, either by his own natural compoſition, or by the agency of the ſerpent, to think, ſpeak, and act that which is evil.* I do not make this remark, with a deſign to inſinuate, that the author unfairly play'd faſt and looſe in this matter; but, on the contrary, I think that as his opinion, in this point, ſprang rather from the *heat* and *ſtrength* of his *imagination*, which men are apt too haſtily to conclude is a *divine impulſe*, or the act of God upon them, than from a careful examination of the ſubject; ſo he was, thro' *inattention*, led into this confuſion. However, the caſe is the ſame, with regard to man, who is the *inſtrument* in the production of evil. For, whether he is neceſſarily determined, by his *own natural compoſition*, or by the immediate operation of a *foreign agent*, he is *paſſive* in both caſes; he doth not act, ſtrictly ſpeaking, but is acted upon; even as a clock, when it ſtrikes, does not act, but is acted upon; whether ſtriking be the effect of the adjuſtment and compoſition of the machine, or the immediate operation of ſome agent upon it. There is, indeed, this difference, with regard to action, as it is the effect of the human compoſition, and as it is the effect of the agency of the ſerpent. In the former caſe, it is chargeable upon the author of that compoſition; and, in the latter, upon the agent which acts upon it; but, with regard to man, it is the ſame who does not act, but is acted upon in both caſes. Again,

I obſerve, *thirdly*, that as Mr. *Barclay* ſometimes conſiders the ſerpent, as the *cauſe* of evil in

man; ſo, when I expreſs his ſenſe of this point, as in the *ſecond* propoſition, I did not uſe his terms; but, to avoid confuſion, I expreſs'd it by the *agency* of the *ſerpent*. And, in this variation, I imagine I have done no injury to his cauſe; becauſe, *firſt*, as he oppoſes the ſeed of the ſerpent to the ſeed of God in man; ſo he conſiders the *ſeed of God*, as an *agent*, inaſmuch as this ſeed, in his ſcheme, is the *active cauſe* of that good, which man performs; man being *paſſive*, with regard to the production of good, at leaſt in ſome caſes. Now, ſeeing this author oppoſes the ſeed of the ſerpent to the ſeed of God in man; and ſeeing, by the ſeed of God, he underſtands the agency of God; therefore, I think, it is not unfair in me, nor prejudicial to his ſcheme, to expreſs his ſenſe of this point, by the *agency* of the *ſerpent*, and to conſider the ſerpent, as the *active cauſe* of the evil, which man is the inſtrument in producing. *Secondly*, Nothing leſs, than the agency of the ſerpent, will be to Mr. *Barclay*'s purpoſe. For if the ſerpent only *tempts* men, and is not the *agent* which acts upon them, then, man is neceſſarily ſuppoſed to have power, and to be at liberty to *comply* with the temptation, or to *reject* it, and to *perform* that good, which is oppoſed to it; which overturns this author's ſcheme. Again,

I obſerve, *fourthly*, it may be objected againſt what I have expreſs'd, as the ſenſe of this author, in the two foregoing propoſitions; that Mr. *Barclay*, in a variety of places in his book, conſiders man, as a *voluntary agent*, his reaſoning ſuppoſes him to be ſuch; and that man has power, and is at liberty to do evil, to ſuſpend the exerciſe of the active faculty, and at ſome times, and under ſome circumſtances, to do good, by *co-operating* with God, and being a *co-efficient* with him, in producing that good, which he, *viz.* man, performs.

forms. But, then, all, that this proves, is, that Mr. *Barclay*'s *ſcheme* and *performance* are full of *confuſion* and *contradiction.*

Having thus, prepared the way, by ſhewing the reaſons for, and thereby preventing the objections, which may be made againſt my *changing* the *terms*, and *fixing* the *ſenſe* of Mr. *Barclay*'s words, as above; I proceed to examine his principles, as contain'd in the two propoſitions, before laid down. And this I ſhall do in the following order. *Firſt*, I ſhall take them for granted, and ſhew, what will neceſſarily and unavoidably follow the allowing them. *Secondly*, I ſhall ſhew, or prove, that they are erroneous. And, *thirdly*, I ſhall examine what the author has offer'd to prove and maintain them. And,

Firſt, I am to ſhew, what conſequences will unavoidably follow Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, allowing them to be true. But, before I do this, it will be proper for me to ſtate the notion, and ſhew what it is which *conſtitutes* an *agent*; and that is *intelligence* and *activity*. By *intelligence*, I mean a capacity of *thinking*, or taking in *ideas*; the ſubject of ſuch ideas being *motives* or *excitements* to action, or to be at reſt, with regard to all ſuch beings, in whom the power of acting reſides. And, by *activity*, I mean a capacity or power of *beginning* or *performing* motion or action, or of being at reſt, in conſequence of thoſe ideas that take place in the underſtanding, and which are the *ground* or *reaſon* of ſuch motion or action, or of the ſuſpending the exerciſe of that power. I ſay, in conſequence of thoſe ideas, which are the ground or reaſon of ſuch action, *&c.* for tho' the ideas, which become motives to action, are not the *phyſical cauſe* of the action that follows; yet they are *neceſſary* thereto, inaſmuch as the action would not take place, without ſome reaſon or motive

tive to *induce* to it; it being abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the active faculty would be exerted, without ſome *previous reaſon* to *diſpoſe* the mind to action; which reaſon is the *product* of intelligence. And, in order to conſtitute a *moral* agent, it is not only neceſſary, that the being ſhould be intelligent, in the lower and leſs proper ſenſe of the term *intelligent*, as before deſcribed; but it is alſo neceſſary, that he ſhould be ſo, in the *higher* and *more proper* ſenſe of that term; that is, that he ſhould be capable of ſeeing things in a *moral* view, and thereby of *judging* of the moral fitneſs or unfitneſs of actions; and likewiſe, that he ſhould have power to *act*, or to *refrain* from acting, upon ſuch *moral* motives, as he pleaſes. I ſay, both of theſe are abſolutely neceſſary, to conſtitute a *moral agent*, becauſe, where either of theſe is wanting, there can be no moral action; and, where both of theſe take place, there the being, in which they reſide, is capable of acting, or of refraining to act, upon *moral motives*; and, conſequently, is a moral agent. As to the word *free*, which is commonly added in this caſe, this term is wholly ſuperfluous; becauſe every agent is free, in thoſe inſtances, and ſo far as he is an agent; a neceſſary agent being a plain contradiction. This being premiſed, I proceed to ſhew the conſequence of Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, in the following particulars. And,

Firſt, Allowing the two forementioned propoſitions to be true; from hence it will unavoidably follow, that, in the doing *good*, or *evil*, man is not an *agent*, but a *patient*; the argument ſtands thus.

If man has not power or ability, in himſelf, to do good, and if he is, neceſſarily, determined to do evil; then, in the doing good or evil, he is not

not an agent, but a patient, he does not act, but is acted upon:

But man has not power, in himself, *&c.*

Therefore, he is not an agent, *&c.*

In thus argument, the major proposition is self-evident, there not being any thing more clear, and evident in itself, than this; *namely*, that if man has not power, and is not at liberty to do good, or evil; and yet good and evil are performed in him, or by him; in this case, he does not act, but is acted upon. The major proposition being proved, the minor is assumed by Mr. *Barclay*'s; and thus the argument is conclusive, upon his principles. Again,

Secondly, Allowing the propositions to be true, it will follow, that man is not the *subject* of *government*. The argument stands thus:

If man has not power, in himself, to do good, and if he is, necessarily, determined to do evil; then, he is not the subject of government, nor can he be obliged by any law;

But man has not power to do good, *&c.*

Therefore, he is not the subject of government, *&c.*

The major proposition I prove, thus. Law and government necessarily suppose a subject who has power, and is at liberty to do, or omit doing what is commanded or forbidden; and, therefore, to pretend to govern, and give laws to other subjects, is most absurd; so that if man has not power, and is not at liberty to do good, or evil; then, he cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the subject of government. The major proposition being proved, the minor is assumed by Mr. *Barclay*; and thus the argument is conclusive, upon his principles. Again,

Thirdly, Allowing the propositions to be true; then

then, it will follow, that man is not an *accountable creature.* The argument ſtands, thus;

If man has not power, in himſelf, to do good, and if he is neceſſarily, determined to do evil; then, he is not accountable for that good, or evil, which is perform'd in him, or by him:

But man has not power, in himſelf, *&c.*

Therefore, he is not accountable, *&c.*

The major propoſition is proved, thus. Accountableneſs, in the idea of it, neceſſarily ſuppoſes a *truſt* lodg'd in ſome ſubject; and likewiſe a power and liberty *rightly* to *imploy*, or to *abuſe* that *truſt*; and, therefore, if man is not intruſted with a power and liberty of doing good and evil; then, it will follow by an unavoidable conſequence, that he cannot, in the nature of the thing, be accountable for that good, or evil, which is done in him, or by him. The minor propoſition is aſſum'd by Mr. *Barclay.* Again,

Fourthly, Allowing the propoſition to be true; then, it will follow, that man is not a *proper object* of *reward*, or *puniſhment.* The argument ſtands thus:

If man has not power, in himſelf, to do good, and if he is, neceſſarily, determin'd to do evil; then, he is not a proper object of reward, or puniſhment, with regard to the doing or avoiding either of theſe:

But man has not power, in himſelf, *&c.*

Therefore, he is not a proper object of reward, *&c.*

The major propoſition I prove, thus. Both reward, and puniſhment carry, in their idea, the ſuppoſition of an action, either done, or omitted to be done, by a ſubject which has power, and is at liberty to do, or omit doing, as aforeſaid; and, conſequently, the ſubject, which has it not, cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the proper object

ject of reward, or puniſhment. The minor propoſition is aſſum'd by Mr. *Barclay.*

As to the clearneſs and concluſiveneſs of theſe arguments, I ſubmit it to every reader; though withal, I think I may venture to ſay, that my reaſoning, as above, is allow'd and juſtify'd by Mr. *Barclay*, in his arguments and reaſoning againſt the *Calviniſts.* Having thus ſhewn, in the firſt place, what conſequences will unavoidably follow Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, allowing them to be true; I proceed,

Secondly, To ſhew, or prove that they are *erroneous.* And this I ſhall do, *firſt*, by appealing to the *experience* of all mankind; and *ſecondly*, by appealing to, and proving it from *ſcripture.* And,

Firſt, I appeal to *all mankind*, whether they do not experience in themſelves a power and liberty, ariſing from their natural compoſition, to ſpeak the *truth*, or a *lie*, to do *good*, or *evil*, in all the branches of it, as the occaſion ſhall offer, whether it regards their duty to God, their neighbour, or themſelves. And, I am perſuaded, every man will acknowledge, that he has ſuch a power, and is thus at liberty, except his *religious principles* lead him to believe, contrary to what he experiences in himſelf. And, this is not *preſuming*, or taking the thing for *granted* which is in diſpute, any more than it would be, if it ſhould be deny'd, that a man has any natural power to ſee with his eyes, and hear with his ears, in ſuch a caſe, to appeal to the *experience* of all mankind, for the *proof* of the *affirmative*; the evidence being the ſame, in both caſes; and Mr. *Barclay* might, with as much truth, and as good a grace, have deny'd the latter, as the former. And, here I appeal to Mr. *Barclay*'s performance, and to the performances, whether by preaching, or writing, of all who pretend to an internal ſupernatural light, as ſuppoſing

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the truth I here maintain. Mr. *Barclay*'s propoſitions and arguments, and his reaſoning upon them, are *offer'd* and *addreſs'd* to *men*, even tho' they relate to *ſpiritual things*. But, why to men? Does not this neceſſarily ſuppoſe, that men, as *men*, have ability to diſcern and judge of the truth or falſeneſs of them, and to direct their actions, accordingly? For to ſuppoſe, in this caſe, that Mr. *Barclay* addreſs'd himſelf, and offer'd his *arguments* and *reaſoning* to *God*, as the agent which performs all good in, and by man; this is to repreſent him, as acting the moſt *childiſh* and *ridiculous* part, and reflects ſadly upon this author. The ſame may be ſaid of all thoſe, who pretend to an internal ſupernatural light; they *addreſs* themſelves to *men*, they complain of, and condemn their bad actions; they exhort and intreat them to act otherwiſe; which, neceſſarily, ſuppoſes that thoſe, they addreſs to, have ability to diſcern and judge of the fitneſs or unfitneſs of their conduct, and to guide their behaviour, accordingly. I ſay, this is neceſſarily ſuppos'd, becauſe to ſuppoſe otherwiſe makes the addreſſers *ridiculous*. Beſides, if theſe addreſſes are not made to man, as *man*, or as an *agent*, as aforeſaid; then, they muſt be either to the *ſerpent*, or to *God*, which, in Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme, are the agents that act in, and by man. If to the former, then, it is God addreſſing himſelf to the ſerpent, becauſe it is God which acts, by man, in theſe addreſſes; man having no power, in himſelf, to perform that which is good. If to the latter, then, it is God addreſſing himſelf to himſelf; God, in the preacher, addreſſing himſelf to God, in the hearer; but this is ſo monſtrous, that I imagine no man will abide by it. And, therefore, as I ſaid before, Mr. *Barclay*, and all pretenders of this kind, will, in their turns, give judgment againſt them-

themſelves, and allow the thing which they deny. But,

Secondly, I appeal to, and ſhall prove, from the *Bible*, the erroneouſneſs of Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, as laid down in the two propoſitions I here refer to. Tho' I grant it is an odd way of proceeding, to attempt to prove that from the ſcripture, which every man *feels*, or *experiences* in himſelf; it being much the ſame, as if a diſpute ſhould ariſe, whether man has the uſe of *ſpeech*, the power of *ſelf-motion*, and the like, to appeal to the *Bible* for the proof of the affirmative; man's natural ability, for the doing and avoiding good and evil, being as much the ſubject of, and proveable by *experience*, as either of theſe; or like proving from the *Bible*, that bread is *changed* into fleſh, which queſtion comes within the cognizance of, and ought to be decided by our ſenſes; becauſe the terms *bread* and *fleſh* are uſed to expreſs *ideas* which are *excited* in us, and *conveyed* to us by thoſe ſenſes. For, when a compoſition of particles of matter is ſo diſpos'd, as to affect our ſenſes in a *particular manner*, when apply'd to them; the idea, which that compoſition raiſes in our minds, we expreſs by the term *bread*; and, when a compoſition of particles of matter is ſo diſpos'd, as to affect our ſenſes in *another* particular manner, when apply'd to them, the idea, which that compoſition excites in us, we expreſs by the term *fleſh*. I ſay, when matter is thus diſpos'd, as to affect our ſenſes in a *particular manner*, when apply'd to them; it then comes under the denomination of *bread*, or *fleſh*, or the like. For if we conſider matter, *abſtractedly* from the diſpoſition it is in to affect our ſenſes in a particular manner, when apply'd to them; this is to conſider it in a ſtate, of which we know not any thing. And, conſequently, when it is thus abſtractedly conſider'd,

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it does not come under the denomination of *bread*, or *fleſh*, or any other *ſpecies*, which matter is diſtinguiſhed into; becauſe it does not excite, or raiſe in us, any of thoſe *ideas* which we call by ſuch names. So that to *change* bread into fleſh is ſo to diſpoſe and change a particular compoſition of particles of matter; which compoſition, *before* that change, when it was apply'd to the ſenſes, rais'd in us the idea of *bread*; does, *after* that change, when apply'd to thoſe ſenſes, raiſe in us the idea of *fleſh*. Now, ſuppoſe a diſpute ſhould ariſe, whether bread is *changed* into fleſh; that is, whether a particular compoſition of particles of matter, which, the *laſt moment*, being alike apply'd to the ſenſes, rais'd in us the idea of bread; does *this moment*, being alike apply'd to our ſenſes, excite in us the idea of fleſh. Would it not, in this caſe, be exceeding prepoſterous to appeal to the *Bible*, for the determination of this queſtion? ſeeing it is evident, that it is not the *Bible*, but the *bringing* or *applying* the *object* to the *ſenſes*, which can, and muſt *aſſure* us, whether that object excites in us the *idea* of *bread*, or *fleſh?* In like manner, if a diſpute ſhould ariſe, whether man has, or has not, *natural ability*, for the performance of this, or that *good*, or *bad* action; ſuch as the ſhewing reſpect to, or the affronting a benefactor; the relieving or adding to the burden of the oppreſſed, and the like; would it not be alike prepoſterous, to appeal to the *Bible*, for the determination of this queſtion? ſeeing it is alike evident, that it is not the *Bible*, but every man's *experience*, which can, and muſt *aſſure* him what his *natural abilities* are, or are not, in this caſe? But as Mr. *Barclay* has endeavoured to prove his principles, from the *Bible*, which proof I ſhall examine, in its due place; ſo I thought it proper to let my reader ſee, that thoſe principles are

repugnant

repugnant to it; and that is all I intend, by *proof*, in the preſent caſe. And,

Firſt, The ſcripture *ſuppoſes*, or takes it for *granted*, as a ſelf-evident propoſition, or a propoſition which every man experiences the truth of in himſelf, *viz.* that every man is enabled, by his natural compoſition, to do good, or evil; and is at liberty for the choice of either of theſe. To prove this, at large, would be to tranſcribe a great part of the *Bible*, in which this is *evidently* and *neceſſarily* ſuppos'd; and, therefore, I ſhall content myſelf, and, I hope, ſatisfy my reader, with producing one text only, which will ſufficiently clear this point. *Gen.* iv. 7. *If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doeſt not well, ſin lieth at the door.* In the preceding verſes, we have an account, that *Cain* and *Abel* brought, each, of them, an offering to the Lord; and the Lord had reſpect to *Abel*, and to his offering; but unto *Cain*, and to his offering, he had no reſpect; this rais'd a *reſentment* in *Cain*, and he was very wroth, which was viſibly ſhewn, in the change of his countenance. Upon this, the Lord condeſcended to reaſon the caſe with him, in order to convince him of the *groundleſneſs* and *unreaſonableneſs* of that reſentment; and accordingly he addreſs'd himſelf to *Cain* thus, *Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doeſt well*, thou *Cain*, the immediate offspring of *Adam*, if thou had'ſt brought ſuch an offering, as thy circumſtances enabled thee, and as might juſtly be expected from thee; and if thou had'ſt brought it with ſuch a temper of mind, as thou mighteſt and oughteſt to have done; *ſhould'ſt thou not be accepted?* it would have been *wrong* in me to have *rejected* thee and thy offering. *And if thou doſt not well*, that is, if thou doſt evil; thou, *Cain*, who had'ſt *power*, and waſt at *liberty* to do the contrary; *ſin lieth at*

the door, Thou oughteſt, in *reaſon*, to expect and reap the fruit of thy folly; and, therefore, thy *reſentment* is perfectly *groundleſs*. Here, I appeal to all men, and particularly to all thoſe who pretend to be under the *influence* of a *ſupernatural light*, whether the text, I have here produc'd, does not *neceſſarily* and *evidently* ſuppoſe, that *Cain*, and conſequently the reſt of *Adam*'s *poſterity*, had a natural ability to do good, or evil, and was at liberty for the choice of either of theſe. To ſuppoſe otherwiſe is to charge God *fooliſhly*, as acting an *unequal* part with his creatures; and *Cain* might *juſtly* have reply'd Lord, thy ways are not equal; for if the *ſerpent* had not brought forth that evil in me, which he did not in my brother, and which it was not in my *power* to *prevent*; and if *thou* had'ſt brought forth that good in me, which thou did'ſt in my brother, and which it was not in my *power* to *do*, then had I been *accepted*, as well as he; but now I am *rejected*, for not *doing* and *avoiding* that, which I had not *power* to do, or avoid; therefore, thou haſt acted an *unrighteous* part by me, and my *reſentment* is *juſt*. Again,

Secondly. The ſcripture ſuppoſes man to be the ſubject of *government*; and, accordingly, it preſcribes him laws to be the rule of his actions; commanding him to *love the Lord with all his heart*, and his *neighbour as himſelf*; and forbids him to murder, or to *ſlander*, to do *evil to mankind*. Now, it is very ridiculous and abſurd, to ſuppoſe that God did not give thoſe laws to man, *as man*, or that creature which is the natural ſeed of *Adam*, or, as Mr. *Barclay* expreſſes it, man in the fall; and that man, as ſuch, has not natural ability for their performance; becauſe, this is to repreſent God as acting the moſt *childiſh* and *trifling* part with his creatures; as requiring *brick*, where there are not *materials* for the making it.

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If it ſhould be urg'd, that God gives *ſupernatural* ability, for the performance of that duty which he requires: I anſwer, this, in Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme, is not giving ability to *man*, but it is *God* which acts in, and by man, man being *paſſive* in the production of good; and, therefore, tho' the *command* is given to *man*, yet *obedience* is perform'd by *God*: which, ſurely, is moſt ridiculous. Beſides, as to ſupernatural ability, I fear theſe are terms with which men *amuſe themſelves* and *others*, by uſing them without any idea. For if I ſhould aſk the queſtion, whether there is any *new member* added to the body, or any *new faculty* added to the ſoul? I am perſwaded, they will anſwer, no; will it not then, follow, that whatever good a man does, he does it by that *ability* which ariſes from his *natural compoſition*, and by which likewiſe all evil is perform'd by him? Hear what St. *James* ſaith, *With the ſame tongue bleſs we God, even the Father; and therewith curſe we men, who are made after the ſimilitude of God. Out of the ſame mouth* (or from the ſame agency or ſpring of action) *proceedeth bleſſing and curſing*, James iii. 9, 10. But ſuppoſing God ſhould *add* any new members to the body; ſuch as a *pair* of *wings*; and that, in the uſe of theſe, man could fly, with as much eaſe and ſwiftneſs as any of the fowls of the air; this addition to his compoſition might, indeed, enable him, in *ſome inſtances*, to do that good, or evil, which, without wings, he would not be capable of doing. But, then, this would not effect the preſent queſtion; becauſe, ſtrickly ſpeaking, his power and liberty of doing good, or evil would be *ſtill the ſame*; that is, he would be ſtill at liberty to exert or ſuſpend the exerciſe of this *additional power*, or to imploy it, in ſerving good or bad purpoſes, as *he pleaſes*; even as he is alike at liberty, with regard to the power of walking,

the uſe of ſpeech, or any other natural ability he is endow'd with. The caſe would be the ſame, if any *new faculty* ſhould be added to the *ſoul*; man, except his agency were deſtroy'd, would be at liberty, to *direct* and *imploy* it to good or bad purpoſes, and ſo to the *production* of good, or evil, as *he pleaſes*. And, this leads me to obſerve what a ſtrange conceit men indulge; *namely*, that they give great glory to God, by *depretiating the natural ability* in man, and by aſcribing all the good he does to a *ſupernatural power*. Whereas man, when conſider'd in his *natural* capacity, is as much the work of God, as any other part of the creation; and all the natural powers that he has, are as *truly derived* from him, as any thing he can receive which is *ſupernatural*. And, if he is a *voluntary agent*, then, a right uſe and application of the one is as *valuable* as the other. Man likewiſe, with regard to his natural compoſition, is excellently conſtituted to anſwer the great and wiſe purpoſe he was created for: and whoſoever ſays the contrary, not only *miſrepreſents* human nature, but likewiſe caſts *black* and *odious colours* upon its Maker.

If it ſhould be farther urg'd, that man does not receive any addition to his compoſition, neither does God act without the agency of man; but God *co-operates* with *man*, and thereby enables him to perform that good, which, without ſuch a co-operation, he could not do. I anſwer, that this *may* be the caſe, in ſome inſtances; but, generally it is not ſo. Suppoſe a man ſinks under a heavy burden, and that it is out of his power to help himſelf; and ſuppoſe that another man paſſes by and ſees him in this diſtreſs: this man has *ſtrength of body* ſufficient to releive the other; his *natural affection* of pity excites him to it; and his *underſtanding* ſhews him the *fitneſs* and *reaſonableneſs* of that relief; and yet, ſays the objection, the one can-

cannot releive the other, without the *co-operation* of *God.* But, why ſo? he has natural ability ſufficient for that purpoſe, and he is at liberty to exert that ability, and ſo can relieve, if he pleaſes; and conſequently, the objection is perfectly groundleſs. Beſides, ſuppoſe God does *co-operate*, as aforeſaid, yet this does not *add* to the *virtue* or *goodneſs* of the being he co-operates with; becauſe the virtue or goodneſs of any *agent* ariſes from the right exerciſe of ſuch power, as is exerted by his *own will* and *agency*; and not in the exerciſe of ſuch power, as is exerted by the *will* and *agency* of *another.* Suppoſe I ſee a man fall into a pit, I pity his caſe, and put forth all my ſtrength to relieve him, but cannot do it; and ſuppoſe that God ſhould kindly interpoſe in this caſe, and ſhould either *add* to *my ſtrength*, or *co-operate* with *me*, and by this means the man is reliev'd; this indeed, would be an inſtance of *God's goodneſs* to the man in diſtreſs; but it makes no alteration, with regard to *me*; my goodneſs or virtue would be equally the ſame, whether God had thus interpos'd, or not: I made a right uſe of the ability I had, without the divine operation, and I did no more than this, with it.

If it ſhould be yet further urg'd, that man does not receive any new ability, ſtrickly ſpeaking; but he receives a *diſpoſition*, to make a right uſe of the ability that he has, which diſpoſition he would not have, without a *divine ſupernatural operation*, but would be diſpos'd to the contrary. I anſwer, the ſtrength of this objection lies in the improper uſe of the word *diſpoſition*; and, in order to remove it, I beg leave to obſerve, that as *intelligence* and *activity*, as before explain'd, are neceſſary to conſtitute a *moral agent*; ſo man, as *man* or man in his *natural capacity*, is ſuch an agent. Man has a *natural* faculty of *underſtandings*, which qualifies him to ſee the *nature*, the *circumſtances*, and the *conſequences* of an action; to ſee what *good*

or *bad purpoſe* it may ſerve, with regard to himſelf, or others; and ſo to *judge* of the moral fitneſs or unfitneſs of ſuch actions, and whether the actor renders himſelf a proper object of the *approbation* or *diſlike* of every other intelligent being; and, conſequently, of *divine* favour or diſpleaſure. Man has likewiſe a natural capacity or power of *beginning* or *performing* motion or action, or of being at reſt; in conſequence of thoſe ideas which take place in his underſtanding, and which are the *ground* or *reaſon* of ſuch motion or action, or of the ſuſpending the exerciſe of that power. And, as *motive*, which takes place in the underſtanding, and which is the product of intelligence, is *neceſſary* to action; that is, to the exertion of the active faculty, becauſe that faculty would not be exerted, without ſome *previous reaſon* to *diſpoſe* the mind to action; ſo from hence it plainly appears, that, when a man is ſaid to be *diſpos'd* to one action rather than to another, or to be at reſt; this properly ſignifies the *prevailing influence* that one motive has upon a man, for the production of an action, or for the being at reſt, before all other motives, for the production of the contrary. For as motive is the ground or reaſon of every action; ſo the motive, that *prevails*, *diſpoſes* the agent to the performance of that action. To this I may add. that every motive is what it is in itſelf, either *good* or *evil*, as theſe ariſe from, and are founded in the *nature* and the *relations* of things, antecedent to, and independent of any divine determination concerning them. So that the caſe will be the ſame, with regard to theſe, whether God interpoſeth by a ſupernatural operation, and intereſts himſelf in the queſtion, or not? This being the ſtate of the caſe, the queſtion will be, what is meant by the term *diſpoſition*, in the *objection?* ſeeing it affirms that a man cannot

not make a right uſe of the ability that he has, except God, by a *ſupernatural operation*, gives him *a diſpoſiton* ſo to do. And the anſwer, I think, muſt be this; *namely*, that God's giving a diſpoſition, in the preſent caſe, muſt ſignify either, *firſt*, the giving a power to *diſtinguiſh* betwixt one motive and another, and ſo to *judge* of their moral fitneſs and unfitneſs; or, *ſecondly*, a power to act from *right* motives, when ſuch are preſent to the mind; or, *thirdly*, the *preſenting* ſuch motives to the mind, as are neceſſary to excite to a right action. If by giving a diſpoſition is meant either of the two firſt, then, I ſay, this cannot be the caſe; becauſe what is here ſuppoſ'd to be given, is what ariſes from a man's natural compoſition; and the having theſe powers is what conſtitutes him a *moral* agent, as I have ſhewn above. Take away theſe powers, or either of them, and he his not the ſubject of *moral* government, nor can he be *accountable* for his actions, any more than a horſe, or an ox, or any other beaſt of the field. But if by *giving* a *diſpoſition* is meant the *preſenting* ſuch motives to the mind, as are neceſſary to excite to a right action; and that ſuch actions cannot take place, except thoſe motives are thus *preſented*; then, I anſwer, it is true that a *good* or *virtuous* action cannot take place, without a *proper* motive to excite to it; and that God *may*, in *ſome inſtances*, kindly interpoſe, and by a *ſupernatural operation*, preſent ſuch motives to the mind, as aforeſaid; and likewiſe, that thoſe motives *may* be the *ground* or *reaſon* of ſuch good actions. But then it is to be obſerv'd,

Firſt, That ſuch a ſupernatural operation is not always neceſſary to the production of good, becauſe the fitneſs or unfitneſs of ſome actions is ſo *plain* and *viſible*, that he who *runs* may diſtinguiſh it at a *ſingle glance*, if I may thus ſpeak. Sup-

poſe I ſee my neighbour fall down in a ſwoon; in this caſe, do I need a ſupernatural operation to *remind me*, that it is right and fit that I ſhould ſpeedily interpoſe, and uſe my endeavour for his recovery? no, certainly. And, thus it is with the generality of human actions, except the uſe of our natural faculties be perverted, by ſome falſe principles of religion, or the like. And when that is the caſe, then, indeed, there needs a ſupernatural operation, or ſomething ſtronger, if ſuch a thing can be, to remind us of the fitneſs or unfitneſs of ſome actions; and ſo to reduce us to a right exerciſe of our faculties. For when men's natural faculties are thus miſled, then the moſt pitiful object will not excite pity, nor obtain relief, from the moſt tender and effeminate conſtitutions; but rather the contrary, as is abundantly evident, from the burning of Proteſtants in Popiſh countries; in which caſes, the cries and groans of the innocent ſufferers are ſo far from exciting pity, and obtaining relief, that, on the contrary, they excite joy and triumph in the ſpectators. I ſay, when our natural faculties are thus miſled, by paſſion, ſuperſtition, and the like, then, if ever, a ſupernatural operation is neceſſary, to remind us of the fitneſs or unfitneſs of ſome actions; tho', as far as we can judge, in theſe caſes, it is ſeldom afforded. Again, it is to be obſerv'd,

Secondly, Suppoſing God does kindly interpoſe, and by a ſupernatural operation, *preſent* to the mind ſuch motives, as aforeſaid; yet ſuch a divine operation is not the *phyſical*, nor the *moral cauſe* of the action that follows. For as the fitneſs of the action ariſes from the *nature of things*; ſo our *ſeeing* that fitneſs, and *acting agreeably* to it, is no other than the exerciſe of that ability, which ariſes from our *natural compoſition*; and all that God does is only *inſtrumentally* making that motive *pre-*

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ſent to the mind, which is the excitement to action; which motive might have been *preſented* ſome *other way*, and, if it had, it would have produc'd the *ſame* action. Suppoſe I ſee a man in diſtreſs, and ſuppoſe I have ability, and that it is right and fit I ſhould relieve him. Now, whether I *ſee* the *fitneſs* of the action, by the exerciſe of mine *own underſtanding*; or, whether it be *inſtantly preſented* to my mind, by the *operation* of ſome *foreign* agent, whether *human*, or *divine*; if I relieve the man, it is the *fitneſs* of the action it ſelf, and not one or any of the ways, beforemention'd, by which that fitneſs is *brought* to my *view*, which is the *ground* or *reaſon* of that action. So that by God's giving a diſpoſition in the preſent caſe, in the nature of the thing, can only be underſtood his, inſtrumentally, bringing or making preſent to the mind a ſenſe of the fitneſs of an action; which, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is not giving any diſpoſition at all. But, to proceed,

Thirdly, The *Bible* conſiders man as *accountable* for his actions; and, accordingly, it *commends* him for his *good* conduct, and *blames* him for his *bad*; and withal, aſſures him that there will come a time, in which he will be requir'd to give an account of himſelf, and anſwer for his good and evil actions. Now, if this be the caſe, which is ſo well known, that I ſhall not quote texts to prove it; then, man has power and ability to do good, or evil; it being moſt abſurd to ſuppoſe that God will call one to account for thoſe actions, whether good, or bad, which it was not in his power to do, or prevent, but were perform'd by the agency of another. Again,

Fourthly, The ſcripture conſiders man as the object of *reward* and *puniſhment*; it promiſes reward to his *obedience*, and threatens puniſhment for his *diſobedience*. Now, as neither obedience

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nor diſobedience can, in the nature of the thing, take place, but where there is *ability* and *liberty* to *keep* or *tranſgreſs* the law; ſo no one, in the nature of the thing, can be the *proper object* of reward or puniſhment, without a precedent *free* action, or *refuſing* to act, as the *ground* of it. God may, if he pleaſe, inflict miſery, or give happineſs to a creature; but that happineſs, or miſery, cannot *properly* be call'd reward, or puniſhment; nor that creature cannot be ſaid to be rewarded, or puniſhed, except he had *voluntarily* choſen to do, or avoid ſomething, which render'd him the *object* of that reward, or puniſhment. And this is plainly the caſe, with reſpect to man, to whom God will render, according to his, *viz.* man's works; not according to what the *ſerpent*, nor according to what *God himſelf* hath wrought in, and by man; but according to *man*'s works, whether they be good, or evil. Hear what St. *Paul* ſaith, *For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 10. Again, if man is *neceſſarily determin'd* to do evil, either by his own *natural Compoſition*, or by the *agency* of the *ſerpent*; he will be *cleared* from *guilt*, and *excuſed* from *puniſhment*, by every *righteous* judge; and it will be laid upon the *maker* of that compoſition, or upon the *agent* that acts in him. It will not be to the purpoſe to urge, that man *originally* had power, and was at liberty to avoid evil, and do good; and that this power was *loſt* to the *human nature*, in, and by the *fall* of *Adam*. I ſay, it will not be to the purpoſe to urge this; ſeeing it is the ſame to *Adam*'s *poſterity*, whether he had ſuch power, or not; their compoſition is what it is, *independent* of their will; and as they were no way *acceſſary* to any ſuch change, ſo it is not in their

their power to *new-mould* themſelves, and make their compoſition otherwiſe than it is. And as *God* placed human nature in ſuch a ſtate, as made it *liable* to this ſuppos'd *change*, upon the *tranſgreſſion* of *Adam*; ſo it would be a moſt ſtrange procedure in him to charge that evil upon the *poſterity* of *Adam*, which, ſtrictly ſpeaking, according to this author's ſcheme, is a *defect* of *his own work*. And, this leads me to enquire, how does it appear that *human nature* has *ſuffered* ſuch a *change*, as is here ſuppos'd? Is not his compoſition *new*, as in the *beginning?* Has he not the ſame *members* in his body, and the ſame *faculties* in his ſoul, and the ſame *exerciſe* of thoſe faculties? Wherein, then, is this mighty change? Why herein is a marvellous thing, man has ſuffer'd the aforeſaid *change*, and yet continues the *ſame*, as before. Again, if man has not power in himſelf to think, ſpeak, or act that which is good; and if all theſe are the product of the *agency* of *God* in him; then, to him that *worketh* is *the reward due*, and, conſequently, it is not *man*, but *God himſelf*, which, in the fitneſs of things, is the *proper object* of reward, in this caſe. But as we are aſſur'd, from the nature of the thing, and likewiſe from the *Bible*, that *the Judge of all the earth will do right*, and that he *will render to every man according to his*, *viz.* man's *works*; Prov. xxiv. 12. Matt. xvi. 27. 2 Tim. iv. 14. So from hence it will follow, that *man*, or that creature which is the *natural ſeed* of *Adam*, is the *agent* in performing all that good, or evil, which is the natural and proper *ground* of reward, or puniſhment. Thus, I think, I have made good what I propos'd in the ſecond place, and have ſhewn the *erroneouſneſs* of Mr. *Barclay*'s principles. I proceed,

Thirdly, To examine what he has offer'd to *prove* and *maintain* them. And, *firſt*, he urges

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Gen. vi. 5. where it is ſaid, *He, viz.* God, *ſaw that every imagination of the thoughts of his, viz.* man's, *heart, was only evil continually.* But, ſurely, if the author had not been ſtrongly *prejudic'd*, in favour of the principles he was maintaining; and if he had but freely exercis'd that ability, which he had, as *man*, or which aroſe from his *natural compoſition*, in a careful examination of the ſubject before him; then, I am perſuaded, a man of his *ſagacity* would have ſeen that this text was not to his purpoſe. The paragraph is as follows. *And God ſaw, that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord, that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord ſaid, I will deſtroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beaſt, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me, that I have made them. But* Noah *found grace in the eyes of the Lord.* Again, the ſame thing is expreſſed, in the 11, 12 and 13 verſes: *The earth alſo was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence; and God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all fleſh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God ſaid unto* Noah, *the end of all fleſh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence thro' them; and behold, I will deſtroy them with the earth.* In theſe verſes, we have an account that God threatened to deſtroy the earth, that is, the inhabitants of the earth, by a flood, in the days of *Noah*; and likewiſe we have the *reaſon* aſſign'd, why God would bring this deſolating judgment upon the earth, at that time; *namely*, becauſe, at *that time*, the *wickedneſs* of *man* was *great* in the earth; *all fleſh*, that is, the bulk of mankind, had *corrupted* their ways before God, and the earth was filled with *violence* thro' them. Man is a creature excellently conſtituted to anſwer

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all the purpoſes of *ſocial felicity*, and to act a part *ſuitable to*, and *becoming* that reaſon and underſtanding, which God hath given him to guide his ſteps; and, when he does this, he *gives glory* to his *Maker*, even as the proportion and conveniences of a building *give glory* to the *architect*. And as man is thus capable of giving glory to God; ſo he is capable of the *contrary*, that is, he is capable of acting a *diſagreeable* and *hurtful*, or, in other words, an *unſociable* part in the creation; and of acting *contrary* to that *light*, which God hath given him to direct his ways; and, thereby, of doing *great diſhonour* to his *Maker*. And this was the caſe of the bulk of mankind, in the *tenth generation*; the thought of their hearts; and the work of their hands, was for each other's *hurt*; ſo that the earth was fill'd with *violence* thro' them. And as mankind had thus *corrupted* their ways before God, at *that time*, which gave occaſion for thoſe ſtrong expreſſions, that *every* imagination of the thoughts of their heart was *only* evil *continually*; ſo this drew on them that deſolating judgment, by which they were deſtroyed from off the earth. God repented that he had made them, that is, he did what is the product of repentance in men, when they undo, as far as it is in their power, what they repent of. So, in this caſe, God did undo, that is, he deſtroyed his own work. This, I think, is a fair repreſentation of the caſe; in which it appears, that the words, urg'd by Mr. *Barclay*, were not deſign'd to expreſs the *nature* of *man* in the *fall*; but, on the contrary, they expreſs the *great wickedneſs* of the *tenth generation*, and are urg'd as a *reaſon*, why the flood was brought upon them. To this I may add, that, if theſe words were deſign'd to expreſs the ſtate of human nature, then, as that nature was the ſame in *every generation* ſince the fall; ſo thoſe words cannot be a *reaſon*

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for bringing the flood in the *tenth generation*, in particular, which it is plain they were urg'd for, rather than in any of the preceding generations; becauſe the ſame reaſon took place in the *ninth*, *eighth*, and in *every generation* before it.

If it ſhould be urg'd, that, in the tenth generation, men *reſiſted* the actings of God upon them, more than they did in the generations before it; and, therefore, that generation became *more vile* than any that preceded it; I anſwer, that as, upon Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, man is *neceſſarily determin'd* to do evil; ſo from hence it will follow, that whatſoever *reſiſtance* there may be in *him* to that which is good, or to the actings of God upon him; yet ſuch reſiſtance cannot be *fairly*, and in *juſtice*, *charg'd* upon him, as his *own*, or be put to *his* account. For as it is not in his power to *reſtrain* the evil diſpoſition of the *ſerpent*, when he acts in him; ſo neither is it in his power to *reſtrain* any reſiſtance to good, which may ariſe from his *natural compoſition*; and, conſequently, the *tenth generation* was altogether as *excuſable* as any generation before or after it. For tho' there may be more good, or evil, ſhewn forth in one perſon, or in one generation, than in another; yet this makes no difference, with regard to *man*, when he is conſider'd, *abſtractedly* from thoſe *agents* that act upon him; ſeeing the human nature, with reſpect to its inability to do good, or evil, is the *ſame* in *every perſon*, and in *every generation*, ſince the fall. And, therefore, the *ground* of that difference, *namely*, that one perſon, or one generation, is more vile than another, muſt be, either that *God* acts more *powerfully* in one perſon, or in one generation, than another; or elſe, that the *ſerpent* operates *more weakly*, and makes *leſs reſiſtance* in one perſon, or in one age, than in another; but, which ever of

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theſe is the caſe, it makes no alteration, with regard to man, becauſe he does not act, but is acted upon in both caſes. And, therefore, to talk of being *paſſive*, in this caſe, as Mr. *Barclay* does, is very abſurd; becauſe, when we are paſſive by *choice*, with regard to the *agency* of another, which is the preſent caſe, there muſt, in the nature of the thing, be a *power* and *liberty* of *concurring*, or *reſiſting*; which *concurrence*, or *reſiſtance*, is a *good* or an *evil* action in us, as it is intended to *contribute to*, or to *prevent* the *good*, or *evil*, which that other agent is proſecuting. So that here is a power and liberty of doing good, or evil, which Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme will not admit. Tho' by the way, we *ſeem* to *aſſume* too much to ourſelves, when we conſider ourſelves as being *voluntarily paſſive*, or of *concurring*, or *reſiſting*, with regard to the *divine agency*. For if *God works*, who can let? If he undertakes to perform a thing by his *own agency*; what agent is there in *heaven*, or *earth*, or *hell*, which can *withſtand him*, by oppoſing his power to God's power? And if we ſuppoſe that the *natural man* can *withſtand God*, by oppoſing his agency to God's agency, and his power to God's power, *when acting in him*; this, I think, is to *magnify* the *power* of *man* above what is *meet*, and which, ſurely, does not ſuit our author's ſcheme. But to return;

As to Mr. *Barclay*'s *ſyllogiſms*, which are under this head of proof, it muſt be granted, that the concluſions are juſtly inferr'd from the premiſes; but then, all that theſe prove is this, *namely*, that *evil thoughts* are not *good thoughts*, neither in *part*, nor at *any time*; and that evil thoughts are *uſeleſs* and *ineffectual* to a man, in the things of *God*.

If it ſhould be urg'd, that theſe arguments prove more than I here allow, inaſmuch as the premiſes ſet forth, not only that man has *evil thoughts*,

thoughts, but alſo that his thoughts are *only* and *continually* evil; and, conſequently, there is more in the concluſions, than I have inferr'd from thoſe premiſes. I anſwer, theſe concluſions are the author's, and not mine, and I only allow that they are *juſtly inferr'd*; but if we conclude more from the premiſes than the author has done, as the objection ſuppoſes we ought to do, then, I ſay, that the *minor* propoſitions are not *proved*, in the foregoing arguments. For tho' the text ſaith, that *every* imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was *only* evil *continually*; yet theſe words are plainly a *loftineſs* of ſpeech, in which, there is more in the expreſſion, when taken *ſtrictly*, than was intended by the ſpeaker. And that this is the caſe is evident from the hiſtory, of which thoſe words are a part; where we are oblig'd, if we will make the ſtory conſiſtent, to underſtand theſe, and ſeveral other *general* expreſſions, in a *limited* ſenſe. Thus, the hiſtory ſets forth, that *all fleſh* had corrupted its way upon the earth, and yet it muſt be ſuppos'd to *exclude* Noah out of this *all*; ſeeing it declares him to be a *juſt man*, and *perfect* in his generation, tho' he was a *branch* of that *fleſh*, which, when the term is taken *ſtrictly*, it muſt *include him*. Thus, again, it repreſents God, as declaring that the end of *all fleſh* was come before him; and yet, ſurely, it will be allow'd, that *Noah* and his *family* were *excepted*, ſeeing they were *preſerved* from the *deſtruction* threatened. And, thus it is in the caſe under conſideration, wherein the words *every*, *only*, and *continually*, are to be underſtood in a *limited* ſenſe, as expreſſing what *generally* took place, tho' not ſo generally, as to admit of no *exceptions*. This is evident from the character given of *Noah*, who, tho' he was a part of mankind, yet he was a *juſt man*, and *perfect* in his generation; which, ſurely, does ſuppoſe, that

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he had *ſome good thoughts in his heart*, at *ſome times* at leaſt. Beſides, Mr. *Barclay*'s buſineſs was not to prove what man doth, or doth not do, but what he *cannot do*; and, inſtead of proving the latter, he attempts to prove the former. It is juſt the ſame, as if I ſhould deny that man can ſpeak truth, and then ſhould urge the following argument to prove it.

If man always tells lies, then, he never ſpeaks truth;

But man always tells lies,

Therefore, he never ſpeaks truth.

Now, tho' the concluſion is here juſtly inferr'd from the premiſes; yet the argument is not to the purpoſe. For tho' man does always tell lies, and this proves that he never ſpeaks truth; yet it does not prove that he *cannot ſpeak truth*; which is the point this argument is brought to maintain. And this is Mr. *Barclay*'s caſe. He aſſerts, that man has not power, in himſelf, to think, ſpeak, or act that which is good; and this he attempts to prove, by ſhewing what man does, and not what he *cannot do*, which was his point. But to proceed,

Secondly, Mr. *Barclay* urges *Jeremiah* xvii. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked.* But this text, when examin'd, I imagine, will appear as little to his purpoſe, as the former. The paragraph is as follows. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord ſearch the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. As the partridge ſitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; ſo he that getteth riches and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool.* It is here obſerv'd, that as the heart is the *ſeat* and *ſource* of *wickedneſs* in man; ſo it is capable of

one desperate piece of wickedness, *viz. deceit*, by which man conceals his other guilt, and thereby disguises himself, and deceives his neighbour. It is farther observ'd, that tho' men may thus wickedly deceive one another; yet they cannot possibly deceive their Maker, because to him the most secret recesses of their hearts lie open; and, consequently, in the issue, they deceive themselves, seeing God, who knows the deceit which is lodg'd in their hearts, will render unto them according to their works, and according to the fruit of their doings; so that their hope and expectation will be *disappointed*, even as a partridge is disappointed that sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not. This, I think, is the sense of this place, and all that is intended to be set forth by it. And, as the scriptures represent the heart, as the seat and source of wickedness in man; so they likewise represent it as the *seat* and *source* of that which is *good* in him; and particularly of that good, namely, *uprightness* and *integrity*, which is oppos'd to the great evil of deceit, beforemention'd. *Job* xxxiii. 3. *My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart.* 2 Kings xx. 3. *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect*, or upright *heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* Luke vi. 45. *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh.* Chap. viii. 15. *But that on the good ground, are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* And as the heart is consider'd, as the seat and source of both good and evil in man; so *Solomon*'s advice, in this case, is, *Prov.* iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* To this I may add,

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that, if God had intended to repreſent that deceit and wickedneſs, which is here referr'd to, as the *natural* and *neceſſary* product of man's heart, he would not have repreſented himſelf, as taking *cognizance* of the actions which are produc'd by it; becauſe this is repreſenting himſelf, as acting the moſt *unrighteous* part by his creatures, in charging them with actions which were out of their power to prevent, as much out of their power, as it is out of the power of a ſtone to fly upwards, which is Mr. *Barclay*'s ſimilitude in the caſe, and which were more properly *his own actions*, as being the *neceſſary product* of that compoſition which he was the *author* of. As to Mr. *Barclay*'s ſyllogiſm, which is under this head of proof the fallacy of the argument lies in this; it *ſuppoſes*, or takes for *granted*, that the heart in man cannot be the ſeat and ſource of *both evil* and *good*; but this is a miſtake, as I have obſerv'd above. The *ſame heart* which produces *evil thoughts*, and is the ſpring of *evil actions* at one time, may likewiſe produce *good thoughts*, and be the ſpring of *good actions* at another; and this men might be eaſily convinc'd of, if they would but obſerve the workings of their own minds, and examine more carefully their natural frame and compoſition. Again,

Thirdly, Mr. *Barclay* urges the words of St. *Paul*, Rom. iii. 10. as quoted from *Pſalm* xiv. and *Pſalm* liii. *There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doth good, no not one. Their throat is an open ſepulchre; with their tongues have they uſed deceit; the poiſon of aſps is under their lips; whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs. Their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood. Deſtruction and miſery are in*

their ways. And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. The Apoſtle's buſineſs, in this place, is, to ſhew the *groundleſneſs* of that opinion which the *Jews* had gone into, *viz.* that they were the *only people* which pleaſed God, by the obſervation of that *law* which *Moſes* deliver'd; and that *they only* were entitled to his *future favours.* And this he does, by obſerving, *firſt*, that the *Jews* were *as vile*, and altogether *as inexcuſable*, in tranſgreſſing the *Moſaick* law, as the *Gentiles* were, in tranſgreſſing the law of nature; and that the *Gentiles* were *as good* and *as acceptable* to God, in their ſubmitting to the law written in their hearts, as the *Jews* were, in ſubmitting to the law given by *Moſes.* And as the *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſtood upon a *level*, in this reſpect; ſo the Apoſtle obſerv'd, *ſecondly*, that neither of them could have any *legal* title to *juſtification*, inaſmuch as they were *all tranſgreſſors*; and, conſequently, that the juſtification of both muſt be of *grace*, and not of *debt.* Mankind, made up at that time of *Jew* and *Gentile*, are *voluntary agents*, who, by their natural compoſition, are qualified to *diſcern* and *do* both *good* and *evil*; and this renders them *accountable* for their actions, which otherwiſe they could not be; it being moſt *unreaſonable* and *abſurd* to ſuppoſe a creature anſwerable in a caſe, in which he has not ability to know and do what he is accountable for. And as man is thus anſwerable for his conduct, ſo God hath appointed a day, in which he will *judge* him in *righteouſneſs*; and, finally, *acquit him*, or *condemn him*, whether he be *Jew*, or *Gentile*, according as his behaviour has been, whether *good*, or *evil.* And, as acquitment or juſtification muſt be either of grace, or of debt; ſo the Apoſtle affirms, that it is *not* of the *latter*, but of the *former*, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, foraſmuch as they

they are *all tranſgreſſors*. This is the purport of the Apoſtle's argument and reaſoning, and this is what he undertakes to prove. And as he was writing to *Jews*, or rather to the *Judaizing Chriſtians* at *Rome*, ſo he choſe to convince them, by a teſtimony, which he preſum'd they would allow, as being a Prophet and writer of their *own nation* and *religion*, viz. *King David*, who ſets forth the prevailing wickedneſs of mankind, according to the uſage of the Eaſtern countries, in thoſe *ſtrong terms*, which Mr. *Barclay* urges, for proof of his point. So that neither St. *Paul* nor *David* intended to ſet forth the inability of human nature in the fall, in the words referr'd to; but, on the contrary, they deſign'd to expreſs the general wickedneſs of mankind, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which neceſſarily ſuppos'd their *natural ability* to do *good*, or *evil*, as aforeſaid. To this I may add, if the Apoſtle had intended to expreſs the ſtate of man in the fall, in the words referr'd to; then, it will follow, that *every natural* man, *every individual*, his *mouth* will be full of *curſing* and *bitterneſs*, his *feet* will be ſwift to *ſhed blood*, &c. which, ſurely, is notoriouſly *falſe*, in *fact*.

Thus, I have gone thro' what I propos'd, and have ſhewn, *firſt*, what conſequences will unavoidably follow Mr. *Barclay*'s *principles*, allowing them to be true. *Secondly*, that they are erroneous: And, *thirdly*, I have ſhewn the weakneſs and inſufficiency of what he has urg'd, to prove and maintain them.

I ſhall add but one thing more, *viz.* if any man ſhould reply, in the common way, to what I have here offer'd, by urging a collection of texts of *ſcripture*, as containing in them Mr. *Barclay*'s *principles*: My anſwer, before-hand, is this, either thoſe texts, when *rightly underſtood*, are conſiſtent

with the *nature* and the *truth* of *things*, or they are *not*; if they are, then, they cannot expreſs Mr. *Barclay*'s *principles*, becauſe thoſe principles are *repugnant* to the nature and truth of things, as I have largely ſhewn: but, if they are *not*, then, I preſume, all men will allow the *conſequence*, *viz.* that ſuch texts *cannot* be of any weight, in the preſent queſtion.

To conclude, I heartily wiſh that all pretenders to ſupernatural light would be modeſt in their aſſumptions, leſt they father their own abſurd and contradictory conceits upon the unerring Spirit of God.

Thus, Sir, in compliance with your deſire, I have laid before you my thoughts on this ſubject, and ſubmit them to your conſideration.

I am, SIR,

Your much obliged

humble Servant, &c.

TRACT

TRACT XXIV.

Human Nature vindicated:

OR A

REPLY

TO

Mr. *BEAVEN*'s Book,

ENTITLED,

Supernatural Influences neceſſary to Salvation; being a Vindication of the fourth Propoſition of *Robert Barclay*'s Apology. Wherein is ſhewn, That Man, in his natural Capacity, is a *Moral Agent*; that he has Power, and is at Liberty to do both *Good* and *Evil*; and, conſequently, can render himſelf either acceptable, or diſpleaſing to his maker. In a ſecond Letter to a Friend. Humbly offered to the Conſideration of the People called *Quakers*.

SIR

IN my former letter, I gave you my opinion of Mr. *Barclay*'s performance, with regard to *man's natural ability ſince the fall*; and likewiſe the *grounds* and *reaſons*, upon which that opinion is founded. And as I propoſed it to publick conſideration, ſo it has given occaſion to Mr. *Beaven*, to publiſh a tract, entitled, *Supernatural Influences neceſſary to Salvation*, &c. which he is pleaſed

ſed to call an anſwer to it. I, therefore, now crave leave to wait on you by a ſecond letter; in order to let you ſee that this perſormance of Mr, *Beaven*'s is not ſufficient to cover the *weakneſs* and *confuſion* of Mr. *Barclay*s ſcheme; which, I think, will appear in the following lines. And, that I may proceed in an open and fair way, and thereby, render the caſe eaſy and plain to my reader, in the following diſcourſe, I think it proper, *firſt*, to examine, *wherein the queſtion or point in debate lies*, betwixt Mr. *Barclay* and me; this being a proper expedient to prevent all *wanderings* from the ſubject, whether on the right hand or the left. And, ac-cordingly, I obſerve, that

The queſtion betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay is not*, whether *God* does *ſometimes* kindly interpoſe, and by a *ſupernatural operation* bring to men's view ſuch uſeful truths, as they, thro' *ſloth*, *bigotry*, or ſome other impediment, are ignorant of, or do not attend to? or, whether by thoſe operations he preſents *ſuch motives* to men's minds are as neceſſary to excite to good actions, ſtill leaving them perfectly at liberty, as *moral agents*, whether they will hearken to and follow, or whether they will reject thoſe wholeſome counſels, as he, by ſuch ſupernatural operations, or, by the written word, is pleaſed to lay before them? Again,

The queſtion *is not*, whether ſuch ſupernatural operations, as aforeſaid, are or may be neceſſary or expedient to ſome men's ſalvation? I ſay neceſſary to ſome men's ſalvation; and, I think, the words of *Chriſt*, as well as the nature of the thing, will juſtify me herein; *The whole*, ſaith our *Lord*, *have no need of a phyſician, but they that are ſick. I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*; as in *Mark* ii. 17. *Chriſt* here diſtinguiſhes betwixt righteous men and ſinners, that is, betwixt thoſe who make a *right uſe* of their agency to ſerve the pur-

purpoſes of virtue and true goodneſs, and thoſe who *abuſe* their agency to ſerve the purpoſes of vice and and wickedneſs. And as he declares himſelf a *phyſician*, only to the *latter*; ſo all his operations, whether internal or external, are directed, to this end, *viz.* to prevail upon men to repent and amend their lives. Again, I ſay [neceſſary or expedient] to ſome men's ſalvation; not upon the account of any *want* of agency in man, nor for *want* of natural ability to ſee the unfitneſs and vileneſs of his preſent conduct; nor for *want* of natural ability to act or to refrain from acting, and ſo to correct and amend his ways: but they are, or may be *neceſſary* or *uſeful* to ſome men's ſalvation; upon the account of that *ignorance*, *ſtupidity*, *bigotry*, *ſelfiſhneſs*, *perverſeneſs*, or the like, which take place in them, and are *bars* to their reflecting upon, and amending their ways. I ſay, that the queſtion or point in debate, betwixt Mr. *Barclay* and me, is not either of thoſe points abovementioned. And this I obſerve, once for all, and deſire that it may be remembered through-out this controverſy. And, therefore, whatever in Mr. *Beaven*'s book relates to theſe points, is to be caſt out of the caſe, as *foreign* to the *preſent argument*. And, when that is done, I imagine, his performance will not make a *very great figure*, when conſidered, as under the character of an anſwer to me. Having thus ſhewn wherein the queſtion or point in debate does *not conſiſt*, I now proceed to ſhew wherein it *does*. And, accordingly, I obſerve, that, in my examination of Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, with regard to man's natural ability ſince the fall, I reduced his ſenſe of this point into the two following propoſitions.

PRO

PROPOSITION I.

Man, conſider'd as man, or that compound creature, conſiſting of underſtanding, of appetite, affection, &c. which ſprang from Adam, *as his original parent, has no power or ability, at any time, to think, ſpeak, or act that which is good.*

PROPOSITION II.

Man, conſider'd as man, or that creature compounded and derived, as aforeſaid, is neceſſarily determined, at all times, either by his own natural compoſition, or by the agency of the ſerpent, to think, ſpeak, and act that which is evil.

Here I obſerve, upon a ſuppoſition, that I have *juſtly* and *truly* repreſented Mr. *Barclay*'s ſenſe in the above propoſitions; then the queſtion or point in debate is apparently this, *viz.* whether *man, in his natural ſtate ſince the fall, is an agent, or a patient?* that is, whether the *good* and *evil* which is performed in, and by man, be the effect and product of his *own* will and agency, or of the will and agency of another? So that the queſtion at preſent is, whether I have truly repreſented Mr. *Barclay*'s ſenſe, or not? With reſpect to which, I obſerve, that, in my Examination of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles, *&c.* I ſhewed the *grounds*, upon which I proceeded in fixing his ſenſe, as above. And, as Mr. *Beaven* has not taken the pains to *examine* them, but has quoted a *propoſition* from Mr. *Barclay*, and has ſet up as a *ſtandard*, by which his ſenſe is to be judged of; ſo I am content, that the point in debate ſhould be tried by it. But, that I may proceed regularly, in introducing the abovementioned propoſition, I obſerve, that after Mr. *Beaven* had conplained

of

of me, that I had not quoted *all* the *fourth proposition*, &c. (tho' the *remainder* of the proposition, which I omitted, related to other things, with which the point I undertook to examine was not concerned; and, for that reason, I omitted it) he proceeded to quote from Mr. *Barclay*, more *largely* than I had done; and, at last, sums up the whole in the following proposition:

"R. B. *affirms and maintains, that man has power* "*and ability, during a day of mercy and grace af-* "*forded to all men, thro' the supernatural influence* "*and enlivening aid of Jesus Christ, whereby man is* "*put in a capacity of voluntary agency, to think,* "*speak, and act that which is good.* See Apology, "pages 114, 115, 116, 117; 132, 133; 147, "148, 149, 150, 151."

I have not examined Mr. *Barclay*'s book, to see whether this proposition is put down in the same words, in the pages here referred to, or, whether it may be fairly deduced from what Mr. *Barclay* has said in those pages; but take it upon trust from Mr. *Beaven*, that either they are the *very words* of Mr. *Barclay*, or else that they express the *true sense* of what he has said; presuming that Mr. *Beaven* would not *misrepresent* the author he was defending. And, as the above proposition is, by the mutual consent both of Mr. *Beaven* and me, made the touchstone, by which Mr. *Barclay*'s sense is to be tried; so I shall understand the terms of which it is composed in their plain and obvious sense, that is, in the sense which common usage has affixed to them. And, accordingly, I observe, that, in this proposition, there are *two* things maintained; the one is *expressed*, and the other *implied*. The thing expressed is, that *man, thro' the supernatural influence and enlivening aid of Jesus Christ, is put in a capacity of voluntary agency*. The thing implied is, that *man, considered*

conſidered abſtractedly from, and antecedent to that ſupernatural influence, is not in a capacity of voluntary agency; and, conſequently, that he is a *mere patient*, who does not act, but is acted upon. It is the ſame as if I ſhould ſay, that my Lord *King*, by, or thro' the grace of his Majeſty *King George*, is made a *Peer* of *Great Britain*. Now, in this propoſition, there are *two* things maintained; the one is *expreſſed*, the other is *implied*. The thing expreſſed is, that *my Lord* King, *by the grace of his Majeſty, is made a Peer of* Great Britain. The thing implied is, that *my Lord* King, *before his Majeſty's favour to him, as aforeſaid, was not a Peer, but only a commoner of* Great Britain; for, if he had been a Peer, antecedent to his Majeſty's favour, then, that grace could not poſſibly make him to be what he was before. And this is the very caſe, with reſpect to the propoſition I have now under conſideration; for, if man is, by a ſupernatural influence, *put in a capacity of voluntary agency*; then, it will unavoidably follow, that man, conſider'd abſtractly from, and antecedent to that ſupernatural influence, or in the language of Mr. *Barclay*, man in the fall, *is not in a ſtate or a capacity of voluntary agency*. Becauſe ſuch a ſupernatural operation cannot poſſibly put him in a ſtate or capacity, which ſtate he was in, antecedent to that operation. And, conſequently, upon Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, man, in his natural ſtate is a *mere patient*; for betwixt theſe, *viz.* agent and patient, there is no *medium*. And tho' the word *voluntary* is annexed to the term *agent*, in the above propoſition, yet that does not help the caſe; becauſe every agent is free or voluntary in thoſe inſtances, and ſo far as he is an agent; a *neceſſary agent* being a manifeſt contradiction. Thus, it appears from the propoſition which Mr. *Beaven* has urged, that I have *juſtly* and *truly* repreſented

preſented Mr. *Barclay*'s ſenſe, in the two propoſitions I have expreſſed it by, *viz.* that *man, as he is in the fall, has no power or ability to do good, and that he is neceſſarily determined to do evil.* I ſay, *neceſſarily* determined, *&c.* For, tho' Mr. *Barclay* has not expreſſed himſelf in thoſe very terms, yet it is in terms which are equivalent to them; for he ſaith, that, *as a ſtone is prone and inclined to move down, towards the center; ſo the heart of man is prone and inclined to evil,* &c. (See the explanation of the fourth propoſition in Mr. *Barclay*'s Apology.) Now the *proneneſs* or *inclinatian* which is in a *ſtone* to move down, towards the center, is not ſuch a proneneſs or inclination as is in *man* to *liquor*, when he is *thirſty*; becauſe this proneneſs ſuppoſes in man a *power* and *liberty*, either to indulge or controul that inclination; whereas the proneneſs which is in a ſtone to move down, towards the center, ſuppoſes *neceſſity*; the ſtone having no power or liberty to *check* or *indulge* that inclination; and therefore, as man, according to Mr. *Barclay*, is prone and inclined to evil, *in the like manner* as a ſtone is prone and inclined to move down, towards the center; ſo this proneneſs and inclination, in man, muſt be the ſame as *neceſſity*. And tho' Mr. *Beaven* has urged the above propoſition, as the *ſum* of what Mr. *Barclay* has ſaid upon the point I have under conſideration; yet he intended thereby to ſhew; that I had *miſrepreſented* Mr. *Barclay*'s ſenſe, which is a little ſurprizing; becauſe he takes Mr. *Barclay*'s propoſition in one view, intending thereby to deſtroy or make void the ſame propoſition in another view.

If it ſhould be urged, that Mr. *Beaven* has quoted from Mr. *Barclay*'s book ſeveral paragraphs, wherein the *agency* of the natural man is only avowed; I anſwer. this is what I have already allowed, in my Examination of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles,

ciples, &c. and, therefore, Mr. *Beaven*'s quotations were *needleſs*. But then, what will follow from hence? why, truly, nothing more nor leſs than this, *viz.* that Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme is *confuſion*, and a *contradiction* to itſelf. Beſides, the *fundamental principle*, in Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme, I take to be this, *viz.* that *man, in his natural capacity, cannot do good, without a ſupernatural influence.* And if ſo, then, man, in his natural ſtate, muſt, upon Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, be deſtitute of *moral agency*. And, conſequently, I have juſtly and *truly* repreſented his ſenſe of the point in queſtion, in the two propoſitions I have expreſſed it by. Moral agency conſiſts in a power and liberty to *do*, or *avoid doing* all that good and evil, conſidered as ſuch, which comes within the reach of that agency; and, therefore, to ſay, that a moral agent cannot do good, *without a ſupernatural influence*, is to ſay a manifeſt contradiction; except the agent be placed in ſuch circumſtances, as that no good action can poſſibly come within the reach of his agency; which, ſurely, is not the caſe of *man*. *Vain* and *trifling*, therefore, is that pretence, *viz.* that Mr. *Barclay* allows *moral agency* to the natural man; becauſe ſuch an allowance is *inconſiſtent* with, and *deſtructive* of the forementioned fundamental principle of his ſcheme. This is what I would particularly recommend to the conſideration of Mr. *Barcley*'s *adherents*; and I preſume it will be allowed, that they ought either to clear his ſcheme from that *confuſion* and *contradiction* I here charge upon it; or elſe to give up a ſcheme which cannot be defended. Upon the whole, it evidently appears that the queſtion or point in debate, betwixt Mr. *Barclay* and me, is, as I have ſtated it above, *viz.* whether man, in his natural capacity, is an

agent,

agent, or a *patient*; which was the first thing I proposed to enquire into. I proceed, next,

To examine, on which side of this question the truth lies. And tho' I think I might very fairly excuse myself from offering any thing, in defence of that side of the question which belongs to me, seeing I have already proved the agency of man, in my Examination of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles, *&c.* and Mr. *Beaven* has not produced the *shadow* of a proof, with respect to the contrary; yet, as the question is now before me, I shall offer what follows. By man in his natural state, I mean man consider'd barely *as man*, and as the kind has been propagated down from *Adam* to this present time, without any thing superadded. And here I presume it will be allowed, that the idea, annex'd to the term *man*, contains a *body* fitly organized and formed, in the general, as all our bodies are; and that this body is actuated by a *mind*, whose principle faculties are *intelligence* and *activity*. Intelligence, by which it is capable of thinking or taking in ideas, of reflecting upon things past, present, or to come, according as it has received informations, and of looking into the nature and the consequences of things, and thereby of forming a judgment of the fitness or unfitness of actions; and a faculty or power of *self-motion* or *action*, by which it moves and directs the body in that way, and to serve such purposes, as it intends. And as the idea, which we fix to the term *man*, arises from the *human composition*, as aforesaid; so that composition is the effect or produce of *nature*, and not of a supernatural influence; that is, it is the produce of those *laws* by which the natural world is governed, and not the effect of a supernatural influence, which operates above, or contrary to those laws. And as man is thus naturally compounded, so he is

hereby

hereby conſtituted a *moral agent*, has power or is at liberty for the chuſing or refuſing, for the doing or avoiding, either *good*, or *evil*; and, as ſuch, he is *accountable* for his actions, and is capable of *approving* or *diſapproving* himſelf to *God*. And as the aforeſaid compoſition is what conſtitutes the *natural man*, ſo our experiencing in ourſelves, that we are thus conſtituted, *proves* to us that we are, in our natural ſtate, *moral agents*, Yea, it is by our experiencing thoſe powers in ourſelves, by which we *prove* to ourſelves our very being. How can Mr. *Beaven* prove to himſelf his own *exiſtence*, but by experiencing in himſelf the principles of *intelligence* and *activity*, acting upon, and directing the motions of that body which he conſiders as part of himſelf?

If it ſhould be urged, that tho' man, in his natural capacity, is an agent, yet his agency is confined to things *natural* and *rational*; and that, with reſpect to things *ſpiritual*, he is *put in a capacity of voluntary agency, by a ſupernatural influence*. To which I anſwer, that *agency in man* is, at *all times*, and in *all inſtances* and *caſes*, one and the ſame thing; that is, it is the ſame active faculty or power of ſelf-motion, and the ſame intellectual faculty which excites to, and directs that motion, in *all the actions of human life*, whether thoſe actions be natural, rational, or ſpiritual; or under any other diſtinction which Mr. *Barclay* has uſed, or which his advocates ſhall be pleaſed to uſe or invent. And tho' the human underſtanding may be enlightened, by a *ſupernatural influence*, that is, it may, by this means, have ſuch truths brought to its view, which otherwiſe it might have remained ignorant of, or might not have attended to; and tho' thoſe truths may become the *ground* or *reaſon* of action to man; yet this does not affect his *liberty*, nor give him any *new agency*; he

is

is juſt the ſame creature as he was before, in that reſpect; his actions are performed in the ſame way, by the ſame natural faculties of intelligence and activity, as they were, antecedent to that *illumination*. And to ſuppoſe the contrary is to ſuppoſe *two* ſets of powers in man, which are the *ſprings* of action in him, as I have already obſerved in my Examination of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles, *&c.* And tho' there is a variety of impediments, ſuch as *ſloth*, *bigotry*, and the like, which are *bars* to the enlargement of human knowledge; and tho' there is a variety of *ways* by which that knowledge is enlarged, yet that does not alter the caſe, with reſpect to the *intellectual faculty* itſelf. The faculty, properly ſpeaking, is not *enlarged* or *diminiſhed*, by the enlarging or diminiſhing of the *objects* upon which it is exerciſed; nor from the *different kind* of objects which it takes in, whether natural, or ſpiritual; nor yet from the *different ways* in which it receives its informations; the faculty, in all theſe caſes, being *no more* than a natural faculty; and a judgment, formed upon thoſe repreſentations made to the mind by a ſupernatural influence, is the *judgment* of that *natural faculty*. And, if action follows ſuch a judgment, *that action* is performed by man's natural faculty or power of ſelf-motion, excited and directed by his intellectual faculty, as aforeſaid. Thus, I have ſhewn, that, by man's *natural agency*, he performs *all the actions* which are performed by him, whether natural, rational, or ſpiritual, as Mr. *Barclay* has been pleaſed to diſtinguiſh them. And if, after all this, Mr. *Barclay*'s advocates will ſtill maintain that man is put in a capacity of voluntary agency, by a ſupernatural influence; this is to maintain a point not by argument, but by *bare aſſertions*; it is ſo, becauſe they will have it to be ſo. And,

Tho' Mr. *Beaven* produces ſeveral inſtances, by which he undertakes to prove that men have been required to do ſeveral *good things*, which were *above* their natural ability to perform; yet, I think, he has failed in this, as well as in the reſt. He urges the command our Saviour gave to his Apoſtles, to *go teach all nations*, with an order, that they ſhould *tarry at* Jeruſalem, *until they were endowed with power from on high*, Luke xxiv. 29. Here Mr. *Beaven* conſiders the preaching of the goſpel to all nations, as a *very good work*; and, truly, ſo it was; and as the Apoſtles did not underſtand the languages of all nations, neither could they come at the knowledge of thoſe languages, *inſtantly*, by any natural ability of their own; ſo from hence he infers, that they were required to do a good work, which was *above* their natural ability to perform.

To which I anſwer: That, *antecedent* to their being in a capacity to teach all nations, it was *not their duty* to teach all nations. And, therefore, the execution of that order was ſuſpended, till they were capable of doing it; that is, till God, by a ſupernatural operation, had brought to their view the *ideas* of thoſe languages, by which the people of every nation conveyed their minds one to another. Here we ſee, that the Apoſtles received their ideas of thoſe languages, by a *ſupernatural influence*; and, thus far, they were *paſſive*. But, in the execution of the aforeſaid commiſſion, in which they were *active*, there is no ſupernatural influence to be found; their tongues, and the organs and inſtruments of ſpeech to them, were no more than parts and members of their *natural bodies*. The principles of ſelf-motion, which were the ſprings of action in them, were no other than thoſe faculties of *activity* which were parts and branches of the *human compoſition*; and their underſtandings,

derſtandings, tho' antecedently illuminated in an extraordinary way, which excited to, and directed thoſe actions, were no other than their *natural* faculties of intelligence; ſo that there was nothing ſupernatural in thoſe actions. As weak are his two other inſtances, *viz.* St. *Paul*'s ſaying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And thoſe men, in *Acts* ii. who cried out ſaying, *Lord, what ſhall we do?* But does this ſuppoſe that what was to be done was above the reach of their agency? No, ſurely; for if it had, then, vain was that enquiry. But,

Poſſibly, Mr. *Beaven* will here turn upon me, and tell me that I am preaching up the doctrine of *ſelf-ſufficiency*; a ſnow-ball which he throws at me upon all occaſions. And here I muſt beg leave to aſk him, what he means by ſelf-ſufficiency? Does he mean that man is ſufficient of himſelf, or by his own natural ability, to perform what comes *within* the reach of *his* agency? If he does, then, I own the doctrine of ſelf-ſufficiency; and, if Mr. *Beaven* maintains the contrary, he maintains a *contradiction*; becauſe, to ſay, that a man *cannot do* what comes within the reach of his *own agency*, is the ſame as to ſay, that he cannot do what he *can* do. But, if by ſelf-ſufficiency he means an ability to do what is *above* the reach of a man's *own agency*; then, I aſſure him, that I hold no ſuch doctrine. But I beg leave to remind him, that, whatever is *above* a man's agency, *is not* his duty. *God* does not require men to do what they *cannot do*; he is not ſuch an unreaſonable taſk-maſter, as to require bricks, where there are not materials for the making them. It is not my duty to know that the planet *Jupiter* is inhabited, nor yet to take wing and fly to the *moon*; the one, at preſent, is above my *intetlectual* faculty to diſcover, and the other is above my *active* fa-

culty to perform; and, therefore, neither of them can be my *duty*, in my preſent circumſtances; the caſe is the ſame, in every other inſtance, whether it relates to *knowledge*, or *practice*; whatever is *above* our agency, does not come into the *line* of our duty.

Mr. *Beaven*, in like manner, treats with *contempt* what I have * elſewhere laid down, as a *rule* of action to every *moral agent*, whether *divine*, or *human*, viz. the *moral fitneſs of things*. But I crave leave to aſk him, whether this is not a rule of action to God, and whether it ought not to be ſo to us? If he ſhould ſay that we have another rule, *viz.* the *word* and *law of God*, to conduct our actions by; then, I would remind him that the moral fitneſs of things is the *rule* and *meaſure* of all divine commands, taking all circumſtances and conſequences into the caſe, † as I have elſewhere ſhewn. And, therefore, a *divine law*, what way ſoever it be revealed, is not another, but the ſame law and rule of action with the *moral fitneſs of things*. Thus, I have gone thro' what came in the *ſecond* place to be conſidered; and have ſhewn, that *man*, *as man*, or man in his natural capacity, is a moral agent; and, conſequently, that the *truth* is not on Mr. *Barclay*'s, but on *my* ſide of the queſtion. And now I proceed,

To ſhew, that tho' Mr. *Beaven* has attempted, yet he has not been able to *prove* the contrary; I ſay, *attempted* to prove the contrary; for if he has not attempted to *prove* the *contrary* to what I have now been proving, then, I do not know what he is at. The queſtion or point in debate, betwixt Mr. *Barclay* and me, is, Whether *man*, *in his natural capacity*, *is an agent*, *or a patient*: Whether *the good and evil*, *which is performed in*, *and by man*,

* Supplement to the previous Queſtion.
† Vindication of God's Moral Character.

is,

is, ſtrictly and properly, the effect and produce of man's will and agency; or, whether it be the effect and produce of the will and agency of another. I maintain the *former*; and as Mr. *Beaven* has undertook the defence of Mr. *Barclay*, in this point, ſo it is his buſineſs to make good the *latter*; and what he has ſaid I now come to examine. Tho' I own I am at a loſs to know what may be properly called *argument*, in Mr. *Beaven*'s book, and what he will allow me to ſay is urged in Mr. *Barclay*'s *defence*, with regard to the queſtion before us; becauſe there is no direct *arguing* upon the point, but rather a *rambling* upon the ſubject; however, ſeeing Mr. *Beaven* ſtiles his tract, *A Vindication of the fourth Propoſition of* Robert Barclay's *Apology*; and ſeeing that propoſition is the *ground* of the controverſy betwixt Mr. *Barclay* and me; therefore, I ſhall conſider what Mr. *Beaven* has ſaid *to incline his readers to be of Mr.* Barclay's *opinion*, as the argument of his book. And,

Firſt, He ſounds an alarm of danger, which naturally tends to awaken the *fear* and the *reſentment* of his readers. "It ſeemed clear to my, Mr. "*Beaven*'s underſtanding, that the performance "of *T. Chubb* had a direct tendency to ſtrike at "the very vitals and eſſence of the chriſtian reli- "gion; and to reflect on the ſtupendous miſſion "and undertaking of Jeſus Chriſt, the Lord of "life and glory, with regard to the deliverance "of mankind from the bondage of corruption, "and bringing them into the glorious liberty of "the ſons of God." Why, truly, this looks *frightful*; and upon men, who lay by the uſe of their *underſtandings*, it is likely to have its effect; that is, it is likely to *prevent* all further enquiry. For if men's minds can be thus *prejudiced* againſt any ſet of opinions; if they can be prevailed upon to think that thoſe opinions are *vile* in them-

ſelves, and *deſtructive* to the future happineſs of mankind, *antecedent* to their being *proved* to be ſo; then, ſuch proof becomes *needleſs*, and all farther enquiry is effectually *barred*. This was the practice of the *perſecutors* of old, and has been in every age ſince. They firſt repreſented the principle of their opponents, as moſt *horrid* and *vile*; as moſt *diſhonourable to God*, and *injurious to mankind*; and, that being once fixed upon mens minds, as all farther enquiry is *needleſs*; ſo the heretick, then, becomes the object of *contempt*, and is thought worthy to be *baniſhed* from human ſociety. Now, tho' ſuch a procedure may be ſuitable and proper to thoſe who intend to maintain their opinions by *force of arms*; yet, ſurely, it muſt be otherwiſe to thoſe who would do it by *force of argument*. Beſides, *truth* does not need to be *defended* in ſuch a way; let her but appear in her native ſimplicity, and that will be a ſufficient *guard* to her. And, as to *error*, may we all ſay of her what *Joaſh* ſaid of the Idol *Baal*, *if he be a god, let him plead for himſelf*, Judges vi. 31. But tho' Mr. *Beaven* has repreſented my principles, as above; yet I beg my reader to conſider the matter, before he gives *vent* to his *paſſions*; for, as men have ſometimes been *frightened* with *ſhadows*; ſo, if he does not examine the point, it may poſſibly be his caſe here. Man, as I have already *proved*, is, in his natural capacity, a *moral agent*; and, as ſuch, he is capable of *apoſtatizing*, that is, of abuſing his agency to ſerve the purpoſes of *vice* and *wickedneſs*, whereby he expoſes himſelf to the *juſt* diſpleaſure of *Almighty God*. And men, in this ſtate of apoſtacy, are, in the language of the *Bible*, called *ſinners*, and are ſaid to be *loſt*. Now, the queſtion is, What *Chriſt* undertook to do, when he came to *ſeek* and to *ſave* that which was *loſt?* Not, ſurely, what Mr. *Barclay's*

clay's and Mr. *Beaven*'s ſcheme ſets forth, to *put men in a capacity of voluntary agency*; becauſe *that ſtate* they were in, antecedent to his undertaking, and, without it, they could not have apoſtatized, could not have been ſinners; it being abſurd to ſuppoſe that there can be *ſin*, where there *is not* agency. And, therefore, if ſupernatural influences are neceſſary to put men in a capacity of *voluntary agency*, and, thereby, to render them capable of *ſalvation*; then, hereby, they are equally neceſſary to render them capable of *damnation* alſo. So that if the *title* to Mr. *Beaven*'s book had been run out to its *full length*, then, it would have ſtood thus: Supernatural Inſtances neceſſary to *Salvation* and *Damnation*. For as *bare agency* does not *ſave* or *damn* men, ſo it renders them equally *capable* of either. Thus ſtands the caſe, upon Mr. *Barclay*'s principles. Now, if Chriſt does not ſave ſinners, by putting them in *a capacity of voluntary agency*, as it is moſt manifeſt he does not; then, the queſtion ſtill remains, What he undertook to do, when he came to *ſeek* and to *ſave* that which was *loſt*?

To which I anſwer in ſhort; that Chriſt undertook to ſave ſinners, by uſing all thoſe methods, whether by internal or external operations, which are conſiſtent with, and proper to work upon *moral agents*, in order to bring them out of their *apoſtacy*, and ſo to reduce them to a *right uſe* of ther agency; that is, to bring them to repentance and amendment of life; that thereby they might render themſelves the *ſuitable* and *proper* objects of *God*'s mercy and grace. Now, if this be the caſe, which, I think, whoever reads the goſpel with care and attention will eaſily ſee that it is; then, it will follow that Mr. *Beaven*'s fears were *groundleſs*; and that my principles are *free* from thoſe *imputations* he has laid upon them.

Under this head of argument, I ſhall conſider what Mr. *Beaven* ſays of my principles, with reſpect to prayer, *viz.* "It ſeems directly and unavoidably to tend to render all prayer to God, "for any bleſſing, help, or aid from him, for "the performance of any branch of goodneſs "that will render him acceptable to his Maker, "impertinent, prepoſterous, and uſeleſs." *Page* 30. But I beg this author to conſider, whether, if *God* kindly interpoſes in the hour mens *temptations*, and, by a ſupernatural influence, brings to their view ſuch *uſeful truths*, as are proper for them to reflect upon, in order to keep them from *ſinning*; or, if he preſents to mens minds *ſuch motives* as are proper to excite them to good actions, which he may do, conſiſtent with my principles: I ſay, I deſire to know of Mr. *Beaven*, whether theſe are not *great favours*, which are worthy of our moſt *ſolemn addreſſes* and *applications* to *God* for; and that, if we do pray for them, whether ſuch prayers are *impertinent*, *prepoſterous*, and *uſeleſs*. I ſhall proceed no farther on this head of argument, becauſe, I thing, what I have ſaid is a ſufficient anſwer to whatever there is of this kind which runs thro' Mr. *Beaven*'s book. Again,

Secondly, Mr. *Beaven* urges, in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, that he was allowed to be a *very great man*, a man of the *firſt rank*. He was allowed to be ſo by the *author* of the letter in the *Britiſh* Journal, *Saturday*, *April* 23, 1723, N° 30. He was allowed to be ſo by Mr. *Norris*, who ſays that he had rather engage with an *hundred Bellarmin*'s, *Harding*'s, and *Stapleton*'s, than with *one Barclay*. Now, admitting that Mr. *Barclay* was allowed by the perſons beforementioned, and by thouſands more, to be a very great man, a man of the firſt rank; yet it will not follow from thence, that his opinion of the point in debate is the *truth*; if the judgments

judgments of very great men were to be ſet up as the *ſtandard* of *truth*, we ſhould be in a *very ſad caſe*; becauſe very great men have *differed* in their judgments one from another. Beſides, urging the *authority* of great names is making the appeal to ſuch *judges* as, I am perſuaded, Mr. *Beaven*, in other caſes, will not be determined by. If I had urged the *opinion* of Mr *Norris*, or the *author* of the letter in the *Britiſh* Journal, or ſuch and ſuch a *Pope* or *Council* againſt Mr. *Barclay*; I imagine, Mr. *Beaven* would have been ſo far from ſubmitting his judgment to their authority, that, on the contrary, he would have turned them upon my hands with *contempt*. He might have told me that this was making the *appeal* to men, who are not conſtituted *infallible judges*; and ſo are not qualified to give an abſolute and certain determination, in the preſent caſe. And, if this would have been a proper anſwer to me; then, ſurely, it muſt be ſo to Mr. *Beaven*. Again,

Thirdly, Mr. *Beaven* urges what Mr. *Barclay* himſelf has ſaid, in other parts of his book. To which it is ſufficient to anſwer, that, with reſpect to the point in debate, Mr. *Barclay* is *inconſiſtent* with himſelf. He ſometimes *allows*, and ſometimes *denies*, that the natural man has *voluntary agency*; but, ſuppoſing he had been uniform and conſiſtent, yet his *authority* is of *no weight* in the preſent caſe. Again,

Fourthly, Mr. *Beaven* urges, in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, what *Monro* ſays, by way of query, *viz.* "I would fain aſk thoſe who deny that any other "light is neceſſary, in order to know God and "divine things ſavingly, but that of reaſon aſ-"ſiſted by outward revelation; what tolerable "ſenſe they will put on the devout and ardent "breathings of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſalm* cxix. *Open* "*mine eyes; teach me thy ſtatutes; give me under-*

"*ſtanding*,

"*ſtanding*, and the like." He likewiſe quotes Mr. *Locke* ſpeaking thus: "I am far from deny-"ing that God can or doth ſometimes enlighten "mens minds in the apprehending certain truths, "or excite them to good actions by the imme-"diate influence and aſſiſtance of the Holy "Ghoſt." To which Mr. *Beaven* adds *Tully* and *Hierocles*, This, indeed, was proper to ſhew his *reading*; but, as I have not *argued againſt* ſupernatural influences; nor have *denied* ſuch influences to be, in ſome reſpect and under ſome circumſtances, neceſſary to man's ſalvation; ſo I ſet by theſe authors, or rather what is quoted from them, as *foreign* to the preſent queſtion. Beſides, if thoſe authors had advanced ſomething, in Mr. *Barclay*'s favour, the quoting them would not have been of *weight*; becauſe it is making the appeal to *ſuch judges*, as, I preſume, Mr. *Beaven* would not be determined by, as I obſerved above. And, I am perſuaded, that if I had urged *ſuch arguments* againſt Mr. *Barclay*, as Mr. *Beaven* does for him; it would have miniſter'd to him an occaſion of *triumph*. Again,

Fifthly, Mr. *Beaven* urges what I have ſaid, as favouring Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme, and as an *evidence* againſt myſelf; and, accordingly, he quotes my words, which are as follow, *page* 45 of Mr. *Beaven*'s book: "If it ſhould be farther urged, "that man does not receive any addition to his "compoſition, neither does God act without the "agency of man; but God co-operates with "man, and thereby enables him to perform that "good, which, without ſuch a co-operation, he "could not do: I anſwer, that this *may* be the "caſe, in ſome inſtances." Mr. *Beaven* having thus quoted my words, he proceeded to make his remarks upon them, which are as follow: "On which I obſerve, if this be the caſe, in

"ſome

" ſome inſtances, that God enables man to perform " that good which, without ſuch a co-operation, " he could not do; then, his hypotheſis of the abi- " lity of the natural man to perform every branch " of goodneſs, without ſupernatural help, is over- " turned by himſelf, and all his reaſonings and " arguments, built on that hypotheſis, vaniſh " like ſmoak. This ſhews the amuſement of his " own ſcheme, and not of *R. B.* which he un- " juſtly charges it with, *&c.*"

Here we ſee this author *triumphs* over me, as if he had gotten a *compleat victory*. But, if he will be pleaſed to read over again with care and attention all that I have ſaid upon the ſubject, in the tract referred to; I imagine, he will then ſee that his triumphs are *groundleſs*. For, when I deſired the depretiators of man's natural ability to give a caſe, in which it will appear that the natural man, as they expreſs it, has not ability to perform any one branch of goodneſs, which will render him acceptable to his Maker; could Mr. *Beaven* be ſo *weak* as to think that, by *a branch of goodneſs*, I intended ſuch an inſtance as is *above* the reach of human agency, conſidering every man's circum- ſtance in life? and, as ſuch, it *is not* his duty, nor is the practice of it *neceſſary* to render him accep- table to *God*. Could he think that I ſuppoſe a *poor man*, who has ſcarce bread and clothing for himſelf, has *ability* to feed and clothe all the poor of this kingdom, when he is deſtitute of the ma- terials which conſtitute that ability? If he did think ſo, I aſſure him he is *miſtaken*. And tho' the feeding and clothing all the poor of this king- dom would be a *very good work*, yet it is not the poor man's *duty* to perform it, nor is the perform- ance of this good work *neceſſary* to render him ac- ceptable to his Maker. Not but a poor man has ſo far natural ability, in the preſent caſe, as

that,

that, if God ſhould interpoſe, and in a *miraculous way* put ſo much food and apparel into *his poſſeſſion*, he could then diſtribute it all, to anſwer the purpoſes aforeſaid, without a *ſupernatural influence*. And tho' this miraculous interpoſition of Almighty God renders the poor man capable of performing *that good*, which, without ſuch an interpoſition, he could not do; yet, ſtrictly ſpeaking, this does not *add* to his natural ability, much leſs does it give him any *new agency*. For all the hand, which the poor man has in this good work, is performed by *that ability*, which ariſes from his *natural compoſition*. So that my hypotheſis ſtands *firm* and *unſhaken*, notwithſtanding the *attacks* of this author. As weak alſo is that which he further urges upon this head, that, becauſe I allow ſupernatural operations *may*, in ſome inſtances, be *neceſſary* or *expedient* to reduce men to a right uſe of their agency, like *as if a ſon ſhould do amiſs, it would or might be neceſſary or expedient for the father to tell him his faults, that he might amend them*; therefore, he pretends that I overthrow my own ſcheme. But how, or upon what account do thoſe operations become *neceſſary*, or *uſeful*, on my ſcheme? Not, for want of voluntary agency in man; not, becauſe he has not natural ability to know and do his duty; but becauſe he *ſuffers* himſelf to be led away by *paſſion*, *appetite*, or the like; and ſo lives in the *neglect*, or in the *abuſe* of that natural ability that he has. It is upon theſe accounts that thoſe operations do or may become neceſſary. And, I hope, this will ſatisfy my reader, that my ſcheme is not ſo *confuſed*, as Mr. *Beaven* imagined. But further,

Man in his natural capacity is a *moral agent*, as I have ſhewn above; and if at any time he *abuſes* his agency, and lives in a way which is unworthy of his *manly character*, ſuch a conduct of courſe renders

renders him diſagreeable and vile in the eyes of his Maker. And when that is the caſe, then, in the nature of the thing, nothing but his *repentance* and *reformation* can poſſibly render him agreeable and acceptable to God; ſuppoſing God is ſuch a *wiſe* and *good* Being, as * I have elſewhere proved him to be. Now, tho' a man be in ſuch a *wicked* ſtate, yet that does not *deſtroy* his agency. He is, in the courſe of his wickedneſs, as much a *moral agent*, as he was, when he *firſt* began to tranſgreſs the rule of his duty. Every *criminal* action, or omiſſion, is the ſubject of his choice; he has power, and is at liberty to chuſe, and do the contrary; and this renders his conduct *criminal*, which otherwiſe it could not be. And, as repentance and reformation are abſolutely neceſſary to render ſuch a man *acceptable* to his Maker; ſo ſuch *reflections* and *conſiderations*, as are proper to work upon him as a moral agent, are neceſſary to that repentance. And tho' he is *capable* of *reflecting upon, and amending his ways, as aforeſaid, and*, therefore, *can do it*, if he pleaſes; yet he does not do it, but either *careleſly* goes on in his wickedneſs, without reflecting upon his conduct; or elſe *obſtinately* perſiſts in it, notwithſtanding ſuch reflection. This being the ſtate of a wicked man, whoever would *reform him*, that is, would be an inſtrument in *perſuading* him to reform himſelf; for reformation, ſtrickly ſpeaking, is the ſinner's own act; it is *neceſſary*, or *expedient*, or *proper* that he ſhould, ſome way or other, introduce, or make preſent to the ſinner's mind, ſuch *reflections* as, when attended to and followed, would be to him a proper *ground* and *reaſon* of his change. And it is in *this view*, that I allow ſupernaturally operations *may* be *neceſſary*, or *expedient*, to reduce men to a right uſe of their a-

* *See my* Vindication of God's Moral Character.

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gency. So that ſuch operations are or may be neceſſary, not to help wicked men to do what they could not do, without thoſe operations; but to *perſuade* them, if they will be prevailed upon, that being the ſubject of their own choice, to what they could do, but would not, or did not, I ſhall proceed no further upon this head of argument, becauſe, I think, this will ſuffice to ſhew, that I am not yet *convinced*, upon my own evidence. Again,

Sixthly and laſtly, Mr. *Beaven* urges ſeveral texts of ſcripture, in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, with regard to the point in hand. So that the queſtion here is, whether the *Bible* teaches any ſuch doctrine, *viz.* that *man in his natural ſtate, as he is the offspring of* Adam, *is deſtitute of agency; and that he is put in a capacity of voluntary agency, by a ſupernatural influence.* To which it is ſufficient to anſwer, that this doctrine is plainly repugnant to the nature and the truth of things, as I have largely ſhewn; and, therefore, is *abſolutely falſe.* Beſides, the ſcripture conſiders man in his natural capacity, as having *apoſtatized*, as having *ſinned*, without once ſuppoſing that a ſupernatural influence was neceſſary, to render him *capable* of ſinning or apoſtatizing. And *God* is repreſented as mercifully *interpoſing*, not to render men *capable* of being Apoſtates, by putting them in a capacity of voluntary agency; but to *bring them out of their Apoſtacy*, by uſing all proper methods of perſuaſion, whether by internal or external operations, to bring them to repentance and amendment of life. Now, if the caſe be thus repreſented in the *ſcripture*, as is moſt notoriouſly evident it is; then, this is as plain a proof, as the ſcripture can poſſibly give, that man, *in* his *natural capacity*, is *a moral agent*; has power to do *good* and *evil*, and is at liberty for the choice of either of theſe, becauſe, if this was not his caſe,

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he could not *ſin*, could not *apoſtatize*; he could not be *loſt*, as aforeſaid, But, farther in the ſcripture, there are ſome *figurative* and *borrowed* expreſſions; as in *Iſaiah* lix. 1. *Behold, the Lord's hand is not ſhortened that it cannot ſave, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear*, &c. And there are ſome *lofty* and *ſtrong* expreſſions, according to the uſage of the *Eaſtern* countries, in which there is much more expreſſed, when taken ſtrickly, than was intended ſhould be underſtood; as in *John* xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing*. In the *firſt* of theſe texts *God* is ſpoken of, as having *hands* and *ears*; and in the *latter* the *Diſciples* of Chriſt are ſpoken, as *uncapable of action*. Now ſuppoſing a man ſhould found upon the abovementi-on'd words of *Iſaiah* this doctrine, *viz.* that *God has a meterial body conſtituted of hands and ears, and formed, in the general, as all our bodies are*; and, ſuppoſing he ſhould found upon the abovemention'd words of *Chriſt* this doctrine, *viz.* that *man, in his natural capacity, is deſtitute of voluntary agency*, in ſuch a caſe it would be ſufficient to anſwer, that thoſe doctrines are and muſt be *erroneous*, becauſe *reaſon* and *fact* ſhew the contrary. And, therefore, to inſiſt that the forementioned texts are to be underſtood in ſuch a ſenſe, as expreſſes thoſe doctrines, is at once to offer an *affront* to the *ſcriptures*, and to the *underſtandings* of men. For, as the *ſcriptures* and *reaſon* aſſure us that God is a Being purely ſpiritual, abſtracted from body; ſo, in like manner, the *ſcriptures* and *experience* aſſure us that man, *as man*, has in him the faculties of intelligence and activity, which conſtitutes him a moral agent. In the preſent caſe, there is no occaſion of a ſtrict enquiry into the ſenſe and meaning of the texts above, or of any other texts of ſcripture, upon which the aforeſaid doctrine may be *liable* to be founded. For.

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as thoſe doctrines contain *propoſitions* which are manifeſtly *falſe in fact*; ſo from hence it will follow, as the *Bible* is the *rule of truth* and the *word of God*, it cannot poſſibly contain in it any ſuch doctrines. And, therefore, if Mr. *Barclay*'s adherents ſhall ſtill maintain that the latter of thoſe doctrines is contained in ſcripture; this, I think, is to maintain that the ſcriptures are as *confuſed* and *contradictory*, as their ſcheme. To this I may add, that, what our Saviour ſaid of his *Diſciples*, in the text above, the ſame he has ſaid of *himſelf*, as in *John* v. 30. *I can of mine ownſelf do nothing*. And from hence I argue; if it will follow from thoſe words of Chriſt, *viz. without me yea can do nothing*; that man, when conſider'd in his natural capacity, abſtracted from all ſupernatural influences, *is deſtitute of volantary agency*; then, it will equally follow from thoſe other words of Chriſt, *viz. I can of mine ownſelf do nothing*, that Chriſt, when conſider'd in his natural capacity, abſtracted from the act and influence of every other agent, *is deſtitute of voluntary agency* alſo. But, ſurely, the latter of theſe will not be admitted, and therefore, not the former. And,

From hence, I preſume, my reader will ſee how *unkind*, or rather *unjuſt*, Mr. *Beaven*'s charge upon me is, *viz.* that *I muſt think the holy ſcriptures romantick and wild*; that *the Evangeliſts were ſome of the moſt deſigning or deluded creatures that ever lived*; and that *Jeſus Chriſt himſelf is not free from ſuch imputations*, page 2 of Mr. *Beaven*'s Introduction. With reſpect to which, I beg him to conſider what manner of ſpirit he is of; and whether this be the produce of that *meak, gentle, charitable ſpirit* which becomes the *goſpel of Chriſt*; or whether it be not rather the produce of that *reſentment* which he has taken up againſt me, tho', I think, without any *juſt ground*. However,

ever, I assure him, that I am so much a *christian*, as not to allow myself in such a practice.

Thus, I have gone thro' the *principal* things, which are urged in Mr. *Barclay*'s defence. There are other things of less note in Mr. *Beaven*'s book, which I have not yet taken notice of; such as his complaining that I quoted from the *fourth edition* of *Robert Barclay*'s Apology, in *English*. But this, I think, answers no other purpose than to acquaint the world, that he is a man of *letters*, who has read Mr. *Barclay*'s *Apology*, in *Latin*. And tho' this is Mr *Beaven*'s case; yet, I presume, he does not need to be told that it is not mine. I am acquainted with no other language than our own mother-tongue; neither do I pretend to be a *master* of that, so as to understand all the *grammar rules*, by which men of *letters* govern themselves in their writings; it being sufficient to my purpose, that I can convey my mind *plainly* and *easily* to my reader; and, if herein I should not be *correct*, I am persuaded, every *ingenuous* mind will excuse it. Neither have I yet taken notice of the mighty value put upon Mr. *Barclay*'s scheme, on the account of its being a *mean* betwixt *Calvinism* and *Pelagianism*. For, supposing it to be a mean betwixt twenty *extremes*; yet it makes nothing hereby against me; it being sufficient to my purpose to shew, which I have done, that it is *inconsistent* with truth, and with itself. Nor have I hitherto taken notice of that *contempt*, with which Mr. *Beaven* treats what he is pleased to call my *darling* notion, *viz.* the *nature and truth of things*; *a two-edged sword, with which I am quickly to dispatch the doctrine of the* Bible; *reduce religion to the moral fitness of things*; *and discard and banish the holy writings out of the world, as a collection of romantick and wild stories of actions done by men, impossible in the nature and reason of things*, &c. These are some of

the *flights* which Mr. *Beaven* has been pleaſed to take. But I would beg him to explain himſelf, and ſhew what he would be at. Would he *diſarm* mankind of every *guard*, and lay them open to every *impoſition*? that ſo when any one of the ſpecies ſhall take it into his head, that he is under a *divine impulſe* or *ſupernatural influence*; and, conſequently, that whatever he ſhall deliver, as the produce of it, is a *divine oracle*; then, mankind have no *rule* or *means* by which they can judge, whether it be ſo, or not, but muſt *blindly ſubmit* to whatever is thus *dictated* to them. I ſay, if this be his deſign in treating with *contempt*, and thereby endeavouring to *deſcard* what he is pleaſed to call my *darling notion* (which if it be not, I cannot conceive what he is driving at) then let him *openly avow* it. Tho', I imagine, mankind are not ſo *bewitched* as to give up their underſtandings, as aforeſaid; and, I think, Mr. *Beaven* pays but a *mean complement* to the *ſcriptures*, by conſidering them as a collection of *doctrines* and *facts*, that will not bear an *open* and *fair examination*. So that the *nature and reaſon of things*, the *nature and truth of things*, and the *moral fitneſs of things*, muſt be ſet aſide as *ridiculous principles* to make way for our *receiving* them. There are likewiſe many other things in Mr. *Beaven*'s book, which I have not replied to; but, then, theſe are perſonal, and, therefore, I diſpiſe them; and they are *foreign* to the queſtion or point in debate, and are an addreſs to the *paſſions*, and not to the *underſtandings* of men; and, therefore, I ſet them by as ſo many *blanks*.

Upon the whole, I think I have fully ſhewn that the *ſcheme*, laid down in Mr. *Barclay*'s book, is *confuſed*, *abſurd*, and *contradictory*; and that Mr. *Beaven* has not been able to *free* it from this charge; however, if *he*, or his *more able friend*, ſhall

ſhall be pleaſed to make a *rejoinder*, the way is clear before them. It is but to come *openly* and *fairly* into the queſtion, free from all *diſguiſes* and *wanderings* from the ſubject; and, then, I am perſuaded, the controverſy will ſoon come to an end. To conclude: I obſerve, that the *great end* and *purpoſe* of Chriſt's coming into the world was to *ſave ſinners*; and not to put men in a *capacity* of ſinning. He came not to make us *men*, by putting us in a capacity of voluntary agency; but to make us *good* men, by uſing all thoſe methods which are conſiſtent with, and proper to work on *moral agents*, whether by internal or external operations; thereby to engage us to *repent* and *amend* our *ways*; to live *godlily*, *ſoberly*, and *righteouſly* in this world, and ſo to *fit* and *prepare* us for the happineſs of another. And, I perſuade myſelf, that, in *this view*, chriſtianity is *capable* of being *defended*.

Once more, and I have done; either man, in his natural capacity, is a *moral agent*, or he is not; if he is, then, man, in his natural ſtate, has *power*, and is at *liberty* to do, or avoid doing either good, or evil; and, conſequently, has power, and is at liberty to render himſelf *acceptable* or *diſpleaſing* to his Maker, without a ſupernatural influence: I ſay, this muſt be unavoidably his caſe, ſuppoſing him to be a *moral agent*. For, if man, in his natural ſtate, has not a power and liberty of doing or avoiding either good, or evil, and, conſequently, of rendering himſelf acceptable or diſpleaſing to his Maker; then, he is not an agent, but a mere *patient*. And, to ſay in this caſe, that there is in man a *proneneſs* and *inclination* to ſin, is to ſay nothing to the purpoſe; becauſe, in a *free creature*, it is ſuppoſed that there is a power and liberty either to *indulge* or *controul* that proneneſs and inclination. So that a power and liberty of

doing good, or evil, of pleaſing or diſpleaſing God, ſtill remains; for if this proneneſs and inclination to ſin either *deſtroys* or is *inconſiſtent* with a power and liberty of doing good, or evil, of pleaſing or diſpleaſing God, as aforeſaid; then, it is the ſame as *neceſſity*, and, conſequently, it deſtroys or is inconſiſtent with our *agency*. But if man, in his natural capacity, is *not* a moral agent, then, I acknowledge his caſe to be otherwiſe than I have repreſented it to be; and, when that is ſhewn, I will give up the point. However, this, I think, is a matter of the *utmoſt importance*, and in which mankind are nearly concerned; becauſe all *morality* and *religion* have an apparent dependance upon it. For if man is ſuch a creature, as I have above proved him to be; that is, if he has in him a power and liberty of doing either good, or evil, and either of theſe is the ſubject of his *own free choice*, ſo that he might, if he had pleaſed, have choſe and done the contrary; then, his actions, in every inſtance, will be more or leſs religious, or irreligious, virtuous, or vicious, as the *motives* to thoſe actions, which are the *ground* and *reaſon* of them, are more or leſs ſo; and then thoſe actions will be juſtly *approved*, or *condemned*, not only in the judgment of God, but of every man's own conſcience accordingly. But if man in his natural capacity, as *man*, has not a power and liberty, as aforeſaid, then, with *reſpect to him*, thoſe actions, which are performed by his inſtrumentality, have no religion nor irreligion, virtue nor vice in them; neither can he, in *juſtice* and *equity*, be approved, or condemned, in his own conſcience, nor in the judgment of any other being, upon the account of them. And as a power and liberty of doing either good, or evil is *abſolutely neceſſary* to render our actions religious, or irreligious, virtuous, or vicious; ſo every *princi-*

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ple which *deſtroys* or is *inconſiſtent* with *human liberty*. I think, ought carefully to be guarded againſt, as being highly *injurious* to mankind. For when man conſider themſelves under a *fatality*, and that their actions are not the ſubject of their own free choice; whether that fatality be brought upon them by the *fall* of *Adam*, or any other way; or whether it appears under the *diſguiſe* of another name; then, not only the exciting or reſtraining *influence*, which otherwiſe might ariſe from a ſenſe of the good, or evil, of the action in view, is taken away; but alſo every motive to virtue and religion is *weakened*, if not *deſtroyed* by it; becauſe, in this caſe, the actions, which are performed in, and by man, are not, ſtrictly and properly, the effect and produce of his *own will* and *agency*, but of the will and agency of another. And as the *fundamental principle* in Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme is, that man cannot do good, without a ſupernatural influence; and as this principle is *inconſiſtent* with human liberty, as I have ſhewn above; ſo the *ground* or *reaſon* of my examining Mr. *Barclay*, on this head, was not to engage myſelf in a *wrangling controverſy*, but to prevent the *miſleading* of mankind in a point of ſuch importance. And as, in the foregoing diſcourſe, I have fully proved the *agency* of the natural man, and, I think, thereby have ſaid all that is neceſſary, or that the ſubject requires; ſo I ſhall take my leave of it and you, who am,

SIR,

Your obliged humble Servant, &c.

TRACT XXV.

SOME SHORT

Remarks upon Dr. *Morgan*'s Tract,

ENTITLED,

A Letter to Mr. *Chubb*; occaſioned by his two Letters to a Friend, &c. In a third Letter to a Friend. Humbly offered to the Conſideration of the People called *Quakers*.

SIR,

I HAVE received a letter ſubſcribed by Dr. *Morgan*, which, he ſays, is occaſioned by my two former letters to you. The ſubject of the *Doctor*'s letter is chiefly made up of complaints. *Firſt*, that I offer'd the forementioned letter to the conſideration of the *Quakers only*; whereas, if I had not been *partial*, if I had not made myſelf a *party-man*, and the like, I ſhould have offered them to the *Calviniſtical Church of England*, and to a multitude of others; tho', by the way, this, I think, is uſing the Church of *England unkindly*; for, however the caſe were heretofore; yet, I am perſuaded, Dr. *Morgan* is ſenſible that the generality of the Church of *England* at preſent, both Clergy and Laity, have given up *Calviniſm*, as *erroneous*. *Secondly*, that I have very much miſrepreſented Mr. *Barclay*. And, under both theſe heads of complaint, I am repreſented, as acting a part very *unfair* and *diſingenuous*.

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As to the *firſt* complaint, I anſwer, that I cannot charge myſelf with having any *vicious* view in this matter. For as Mr. *Barclay*'s book is ſtyl'd, *An Apology for the true Chriſtian Divinity, as the ſame is held forth and preached by the People called* Quakers; and as, I apprehend, Mr. *Barclay*' Apology is held in great *veneration* by the people of that profeſſion, who, therefore, probably are much *influenc'd* by it; ſo I thought it was ſuitable and proper to recommend what I had to offer upon the ſubject, to their conſideration, not in the leaſt intending thereby to make myſelf a *party-man*, or to inſinuate any thing which might be *diſhonourable* to the *Quakers*. This is the *truth* of the caſe; but, whether it will be to the *Doctor*'s ſatisfaction, I know not. And, whether I have given any *juſt* occaſion for what he has urged againſt me upon this head, I will leave to the *more candid world* to judge. Again,

Secondly, It is urged that I have very much *miſrepreſented* Mr. *Barclay*. In anſwer to which I obſerve, that, in the 27th page of Dr. *Morgan*'s letter, he expreſſes himſelf in the following words. "It might, for ought I know, be Mr. *Barclay*'s "opinion, that the ſtate of mankind, conſidered "merely as fallen in *Adam*, without the *death* of "*Chriſt*, or the recovering grace of *God* thro' "him, would have been the ſame as repreſented "in your propoſitions; that is, men would have "been *abſolutely ſubjected* to the *power* of the *de*"*vil*, and their own *luſts*, under an *incurable* ig"norance, blindneſs, and ſelfiſhneſs; in which "caſe, man would not have been a *moral agent*, "or *accountable* for his actions. And, in conſe"quence of this, man would have *periſhed* with "the *beaſts*, or have remained for ever under "the *power* of *death*, without any *reſurrection* to "life and immortality. And I am the more apt

" to think that this might be *Barclay*'s opinion, " becauſe I take it to be the *true ſcripture* account " of the matter." Here I obſerve, that Dr. *Morgan* acknowledges that Mr. *Barclay*'s *opinion* of the condition of man in the fall, conſidered abſtractedly from, and without the grace of Chriſt, *may* be, and he thinks that it is, what I have repreſented it to be, in the two propoſitions I have expreſſed it by. Now, if this be admitted to be the caſe, then, it is highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe that Mr. *Barclay* expreſſed *this opinion* in that propoſition, wherein he profeſſedly undertook to treat of this ſubject; and if ſo, then, ſurely, I cannot have *miſrepreſented* him in my two propoſitions, becauſe I only repreſented him, as ſpeaking his own opinion ſet forth and declared in his own propoſition. And here I crave leave to obſerve, that tho' the *Doctor*'s complaint againſt me, of *miſrepreſenting* Mr. *Barclay*, makes up a great part of his letter, and is every way repreſented to my diſadvantage; yet this complaint, by his *own* acknowledgment, is *perfectly groundleſs*.

Mr. *Barclay* ſpeaks of man under a two-fold conſideration, *firſt*, as he is in, what we call, his natural condition, *viz.* man as *man*, or as *the natural ſeed of Adam*, or as *he is in the fall*, with reſpect to his capacities and abilities, conſidered abſtractedly from the grace of Chriſt, or any ſupernatural influence upon him.

Secondly, *He* conſiders man, with reſpect to his capacities and abilities, when under a *ſupernatural* influence, and the enlivening aid of *Jeſus Chriſt*. But, then, he does not conſider man, in this laſt view, as *his ſtate in the fall*, but, on the contrary, as having ſomething ſupernatural afforded him to reſtore and recover him from that fall. So that the condition of man in the fall, in Mr. *Barclay*'s *ſenſe*, is the natural ſtate and condition of every

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man, as he is *a man*, or the offſpring of *Adam*, with reſpect to his capacities and abilities, at all times, and in all places, conſidered abſtractedly from the *grace* of *Chriſt*, or any *ſupernatural* influence upon him. Dr. *Morgan* indeed, in treating of this ſubject, expreſſes himſelf *differently* from Mr. *Barclay*, and ſpeaks of man, not *what he is*, but what *he would have been* in the fall, without the grace of Chriſt. Whereas Mr. *Barclay* expreſſes himſelf thus: "All *Adam*'s poſte-"rity, or mankind, both *Jew* and *Gentile*, as to "the firſt *Adam* or earthly man, *are fallen, degene-"rate, and dead*," not *would have been fallen, degenerate, and dead.* Again, "man, therefore, as "*he is in this ſtate*, can know nothing aright;" not as *he would have been in another ſtate*, he would not have known any thing aright. Here we ſee, that *the condition of man in the fall*, according to Mr. *Barclay*, is not any *chimerical Hottentot Yahoo* ſtate, which man *would have been in*, without the grace of Chriſt; but it is the ſtate and condition of mankind, which *they are in*, as they are *barely men*, or the offſpring of *Adam*, conſidered as ſuch, without any ſupernatural influence upon them. Whether by this *different* way of ſpeaking, which, I find, runs thro' the *Doctor*'s letter, he intended to convey to his reader the *ſame idea* of the condition of man in the fall, as plainly appears to ariſe from Mr. *Barclay*'s *words*, and which, I think, he ought to intend, if he would be *ingenuous* in the defence of that author; or whether he intended *another view* of the condition of man in the fall, than what Mr. *Barclay* profeſſedly treats of, I know not, neither am I ſollicitous about it, becauſe the caſe is not changed by any wrong repreſentation which may be given of it. Man being repreſented in a two-fold view by Mr. *Barclay*, as I obſerved above; I undertook

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to examine his principles, *only* with reſpect to *one* of thoſe views, viz. *man as he is in the fall.* And to this I applied myſelf, both in my Examination of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles, and in my Reply to Mr. *Beaven*; wherein I have taken a view of the natural condition of man, conſider'd abſtractedly from, and without the grace of Chriſt; and, I think, have fully ſhewn, that *human nature* is very much *miſrepreſented* by Mr. *Barclay*, without blending together and confounding his two-fold view of man, as the Doctor repreſents me to have done. And as I undertook to examine Mr. *Barclay*'s opinion in this *one point*, viz. the condition of man, as *man*, or as *he is the natural ſeed of* Adam, or as *he is in the fall*, conſidered abſtractedly from, and without the grace of Chriſt; ſo I reduced his ſenſe of this point to two plain propoſitions; which propoſitions Dr. *Morgan* allows may be a *juſt* and *true* repreſentation of Mr. *Barclay*'s ſenſe herein; and that man in this view, according to Mr. *Barclay*, is not a *moral agent*, is not *accountable*, &c. and if ſo, then, I have not miſrepreſented him; and, conſequently, Dr. *Morgan*'s complaint is *groundleſs*, by his own acknowledgment.

But, then, the Doctor obſerves, that it will not follow from hence that man is a *mere patient*; for tho', in his natural condition, he is not a *moral agent*; yet he is *an agent*, ſuch as the *brute beaſts* are. To which I anſwer, that according to the Doctor's repreſentation of the condition of man in the fall, which he thinks may be the opinion of Mr. *Barclay*, men, without the grace of Chriſt, would be *abſolutely ſubjected* to the *power* of the *devil* and their own *luſts*; and if ſo, then, what ſort of agency would remain in them, I cannot conceive; not, ſurely, ſuch agency as takes place

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in brutes, becauſe they are not *abſolutely ſubjected*, as aforeſaid, their actions being the effect of *choice* or *election*; for otherwiſe they could not be agents. A mere machine is *abſolutely ſubjected* to the power of the agent, which acts upon it; and one agent may be *abſolutely ſubjected* to the power of another, when he has not ſufficient ſtrength to *repel* force with force; but, then, in ſuch a caſe, he does not *act*, but is *acted* upon. Whereas, in all caſes, where *action* takes place, or where there is ſufficient ſtrength to *repel* force with force; there both *activeneſs* and *paſſiveneſs*, or *action* and *paſſion*, is the produce of *choice* or *election*; and, conſequently, there is not *abſolute ſubjection*. So that if man, as he is in the fall, according to Mr. *Barclay* and Dr. *Morgan*, is *abſolutely ſubjected* to the *power* of the *devil* and his own *luſts*; then, in that ſtate, he is not an *agent*, but a *patient*. And this muſt be his caſe, both *without* and *with* the grace of Chriſt; except the work of grace conſiſts in turning a *patient* into an *agent*, which, I preſume, Dr. *Morgan* will not affirm.

But admitting that ſuch agency, as in *brute beaſts*, would take place in the natural man, upon Mr. *Barclay*'s principles; yet the Doctor does not pretend that this is the *truth* of the caſe; he only obſerves, that it appears to him to be the *true ſcripture* account of the caſe, and that he *thinks* it is not contrary to the *reaſon* of things or the *conſtitution of human nature*. As to its being the *ſcripture* account of the caſe, *viz.* that man, in his natural capacity, is not a *moral agent*; that his ſoul is *naturally mortal*, and dies or periſhes with the body, *&c.* This, I think, is uſing the ſcripture *unkindly*, becauſe, I imagine, it is out of his power to ſhew that there are any *ſuch doctrines* contained therein. Surely, nothing is more *plain* and *evident* in the ſcriptures, than that the *work* of

of *grace* conſiſts in changing men from *bad* to *good*, and not in turning *brutes*, ſtrictly and properly ſo called, into *men*. And as to its being the *Doctor*'s *opinion*, that it is not *contrary* to the conſtitution of human nature, that men ſhould be *brutes*, and not *moral agents*; in this I can ſcarce believe him. That men may *neglect*, as well as *abuſe* their faculties, and ſo live in a way which is *unworthy* of and *below* their *reaſon*, is eaſy to be conceived, and is, I think, the caſe of the *Hottentots*. But that a man ſo well acquainted with the human conſtitution, as Dr. *Morgan* may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be, *can think* that brutality, and not moral agency, may be the *natural reſult* of the conſtitution of man, when that conſtitution has not ſuffer'd any injury by any accident which may attend it; this is what I am doubtful of. I cannot but that think the Doctor has obſerved, in the courſe of his practice, as a *phyſician*, many inſtances of perſons who have become *delirious* or *lunatick*, when they have been under a *violent fever*, or ſome other *diſorder* upon their *conſtitutions*; and ſo, for a time, have ceaſed to be *moral agents*; and that, by the application of proper *medicines*, the diſorder upon the conſtitution has been *removed*, the delirouſneſs or lunacy has *ceaſed*; and the perſon has *returned again* to a ſtate of moral agency. Now, the queſtion ariſing from hence will be, whether delirouſneſs or lunacy, or whether moral agency in ſuch a perſon, be the *natural reſult* of the *human conſtitution?* and which of theſe ſtates may, ſtrictly and properly, be ſaid to be the *natural ſtate* of that perſon? Or the queſtion may be, when a man becomes delirious or lunatick, whether this ariſes from his *ceaſing* to be under the *grace* of *Chriſt*, and thereby ceaſing to be a moral agent; or whether it be the *effect* of a diſorder in his conſtitution? And, when his

his diliriousneſs or lunacy *goes off*, whether this be the *effect* of the *return* of the *grace* of *Chriſt* upon him, and by its return he becomes a moral agent again; or whether it be not the *effect* of the *removal* of a *diſorder* from the conſtitution, and ſo the creature is *reſtored* again to what is properly its natural ſtate, viz. *moral agency?* The like may be ſaid of *idiots*. For, I think, upon Dr. *Morgan*'s ſcheme, idiotiſm is not the reſult of ſome *defect* in the *particular conſtitution* of the idiot, but it is occaſioned by the *grace* of *Chriſt*, or a *ſupernatural* influence, being *with-held* from him. Theſe are caſes which, I think, are proper to be conſidered, in order to our diſcerning and judging, whether *brutality*, or *moral agency*, may be the natural reſult of the human conſtitution. But to return,

If it ſhould be ſaid, Tho' man, in his *natural* condition, according to Mr. *Barclay*, is *abſolutely ſubjected* to the *power* of the *devil* and his own *luſts*, and ſo is upon a *level* with the brute beaſts, or in a ſtate *below* them; yet that no *contradiction* ariſes from hence. I *anſwer*; Mr. *Barclay* expreſſes himſelf *differently*, with reſpect to the *natural condition of man in the fall*, in other parts of his book; as in page 144. as quoted by Mr. *Beaven*: "Indeed, that man, as he is a rational creature, "hath reaſon, as a natural faculty of his ſoul, "by which he can diſcern things that are ra-"tional, we deny not." Here we ſee that the *natural man* is conſider'd as a *rational creature*, one who has *reaſon* as a *natural faculty* of his *ſoul*, by which he can diſcern things that are *rational*; and, if ſo, then, ſurely, he is a *moral agent*; and this I call *confuſion* and *contradiction*. Beſides, the Doctor ſays, page 23. "'Tis plain, that Mr. *Barclay* "here ſuppoſes that the *good* and *evil ſeed*, as he "calls it, that is, the *motives* and *inducements* that incline

" incline and diſpoſe men to *ſelfiſhneſs* on the one " hand, or to *benevolence* on the other, do not act " *neceſſarily*, or produce their effects by any *irre-* " *ſiſtible* agency upon the mind; but leave men " entirely to their *liberty*, and *natural power* of " *chuſing* and *refuſing*, whether they will reſiſt or " not reſiſt, comply with or reject either the " one or the other." And, if ſo, then, I think, it will not only follow that man is a *free creature*, and a *moral agent*, but alſo that he is ſuch, *antecedent* to, and *independent* of all *ſupernatural* influences, whether *good*, or *evil*; and then, I think, man's ability *in* the fall, and *out* of the fall, comes to the ſame thing; which brings more confuſion ſtill. For, according to Mr. *Barclay*, man in the fall is a *free creature*, and he is *not* a free creature; he is a *moral agent*, and he is *not* a moral agent; he is *abſolutely ſubjected* to the *power* of the *devil* and his own *luſts*, and he is *not* abſolutely ſubjected to the power of the devil and his own luſts. I ſay, this will unavoidably be the caſe, upon Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme. And it appears to be ſo, without confounding the two views he takes of man, which the Doctor repreſents me to have done. And this is ſuch *confuſion* and *contradiction*, as, I imagine, Dr. *Morgan* will not be able to get clear of.

But to conclude; the Doctor tells me that my notion of *Chriſt*'s *redemption*, and the *neceſſity* of *divine grace* is, he thinks, a little extraordinary for a chriſtian. Let it be ſo. He likewiſe tells me, 'tis by way of ſcorn and reproach, and with an air of ridicule, that Chriſt tells the proud ſelf-juſtifying *Phariſees*, that he had no buſineſs or concern with them, as ſuch. But if he will pleaſe to conſider the text, I think, he may ſee that Chriſt, in that place, is not, *reproaching* the *Phariſees*, but *juſtifying himſelf* and his ows *conduct*, in keeping com-

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pany with *Publicans* and *Sinners*; and this he does by telling them, that, in this, he was perſuing the great end and purpoſe of his *miniſtry*, and like a good *phyſician*, who miniſters not to the *healthful*, but to the *ſick*. So his buſineſs was to apply himſelf, not to the *good* and *virteous*, but to *vicious men*, to bring them to repentance and amendment of life. But ſuppoſing I am miſtaken herein, yet, ſurely, Dr. *Morgan*'s notion or repreſentation of *Chriſt's redemption* is ſomewhat *extraordinary*, as well as mine. With him, it is extended to *all* mankind, without *exception*; and yet the poor *Hottentots* are excepted, they are *left* in their fallen ſtate, without any redemption; they are to die like *brute beaſts* as they are, and to *remain* under the power of death, without any *reſurrection* to life and immortality. And ſo the chriſtian redemption is a *geneneral redemption*, as it is extended *univerſally to all*; and it is a *particular redemption*, as the poor *Hottentots* are excluded from it. But, I ſhall leave the Doctor, with his *confuſed* and *contradictory Hottentot* ſcheme; preſuming he is as *ſingular* herein, as, he imagines, I am in mine.

Thus, Sir, I have given you a ſhort view of Dr. *Morgan*'s letter, and have ſhewn you how *groundleſs* his *complaints* againſt me are; and if he ſhould go on as he begun, I think, I ſhall give you no farther trouble on his account.

I am, SIR,

Your obliged humble

Servant, &c.

TRACT

TRACT XXVI.

Scripture Evidence conſider'd:

IN

A View of the Controverſy, betwixt the Author and Mr. *Barclay*'s Defenders, *viz.* Mr. *Beaven* and Dr. *Morgan*. Wherein is ſhewn, What *Qualifications* are abſolutely neceſſary to take Place in the *Bible*, in order to render it *capable* of being the *Rule* of *Truth*; and that, as it is ſuch a Rule, the following Propoſition, *viz. that Man cannot do what is morally Good, without a Supernatural Influence*, is not, nor cannot be contained therein. In a fourth Letter to a Friend. Humbly offered to the Conſideration of the People called *Quakers*.

SIR,

IN my *firſt* letter, I gave you my opinion of Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, with reſpect to man's natural ability ſince the fall; and ſhewed you that this ſcheme is *confuſion*, and a *contradiction* to itſelf. This has alarmed the *Quakers*, or ſome of them at leaſt; and tho' they cannot defend thoſe principles, yet they ſeem unwilling they ſhould be given up. And this has given occaſion to Mr *Beaven* to appear in Mr. *Barclay*'s *defence*, in a tract entitled, *Supernatural Influences neceſſary to Salvation*, &c. what he has principally offer'd in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, is, that I have *miſrepreſented him* in the *two propoſitions*, by which I have expreſſed his ſenſe of the condition of man in the fall; and likewiſe that *my principles* are very

very *injurious*; that Mr. *Barclay* was allow'd to be a *very great man*; that he has *declar'd otherwiſe* than what my *two propoſitions* ſet forth, in other parts of his book; that I have *contradicted myſelf*; that *Monro* and *Locke*, *Tully* and *Hierocles*, were of Mr. *Barclay*'s *opinion*; and that the *ſcriptures* are on his ſide of the queſtion. The *groundleſneſs* of ſome of theſe, and the *weakneſs* of the reſt, I have fully ſhewn in my *ſecond* letter.

Which letter, together with the former, hath drawn forth another advocate for Mr. *Barclay*, namely, Dr. *Morgan*, in a tract, entitled, *A Letter to me*; which letter is principally made up of complaints, *viz.* that I recommended my two letters to the conſideration of the *Quakers only*; whereas if I had not been *partial*, if I had not made my ſelf a *party-man*, *&c.* I ſhould have offer'd them to a multitude of others; and likewiſe that I have very much *miſrepreſented* Mr. Barclay. The groundleſneſs of theſe complaints I have ſhewn you, in my *third* letter.

Dr. *Morgan* has alſo appear'd a *ſecond* time, in a tract entitled, *A farther Defence of Mr.* Barclay; in which tract he gives a particular account of the condition of man in the fall, when conſider'd abſtractedly from *ſupervening grace*. And this new ſcheme he conſiders as Mr. *Barclay*'s, and as the *ſcripture* account of the matter, *viz.* that man in the fall, without ſupervening grace, has *natural liberty*, but is deſtitute of *moral agency*. This diſtinction he complains I have not made, and it is with him a diſtinction of ſuch importance, that it helps him out upon all occaſions; with reſpect to which, I allow the Doctor, if that will pleaſe him, that there may be natural liberty in a creature, where there is not moral agency; but where moral agency takes place, which is the caſe of man, there natural liberty and moral agency are the ſame thing;

and, therefore, I made no such distinction, because, in the case before us, there is no place for it,

By natural liberty I understand the Doctor means, that man in the fall, without supervening grace, has power, and is at liberty, *to act*, or *not act*, from such motives as are present to his mind; that he has power, and his at liberty, either to *follow*, or to *controul* his appetites and passions, and the like. This is the idea which the words, *natural liberty*, convey to me. But how such liberty will consist with man's being *absolutely subjected* to the power of his own lusts is what I cannot conceive. Absolute subjection, in the present case, seems to suppose, that when *passion* or *appetite* interpose, man is *necessarily* and *unavoidably* carry'd on to action, independent of his own will or choice; but, then, this appears to me inconsistant with natural liberty, and his confusion and contradiction; tho' possibly the Doctor, by the help of some lucky distinction may get clear off it. Again, if man has natural liberty, then, how he is *absolutely subjected* to the power of the Devil is hard to conceive. Absolute subjection, in this case, seems to suppose that when the *devil* exercises his power in or upon a man, action from that man will *unavoidably follow* according to the *devil's* intention; and that, in such a case, it is not in a man's power to refrain from acting, or to act otherwise; but, then, this is inconsistent with natural liberty. And if we consider the devil's power to consist only in *tempting men* to the performance of this or that action, which it has hitherto been judged to be; and if man has natural liberty, as aforesaid, then, it is a matter of choice or election to every man, either to *comply with*, or to *reject* the devil's temptation. But, then, in this case, man is not absolutely subjected to the devil's power;

er; ſo that the whole is manifeſt confuſion and contradiction. Beſides, it has hitherto been judged, that the work and buſineſs of the devil with man has been to tempt and betray him into *ſin*; whereas man in the fall having only natural liberty, and being deſtitude of moral agency, he is *incapable* of *ſinning*, and, conſequently, of being *tempted* to *ſin*. And when we conſider the caſe, in this view, it will be hard to find what is the *ground* of the devil's temptations, and what it is which makes him to intereſt himſelf in the affairs of mankind; tho', perhaps, this may be all clear'd up in the Doctor's next performance.

If it ſhould be urged, that I have uſed the terms, *abſolute ſubjection*, in a ſenſe *too ſtrong* for what Dr. *Morgan* intended. I *anſwer*, if abſolute ſubjection does not *force to action*, but men are at *liberty* to act, or not to act, notwithſtanding ſuch ſubjection; then, I think, the caſe will ſtand thus, *viz.* that there are *appetites* and *paſſions* in men; and that they have power, and are at liberty either to *indulge* or *controul* them; that the *devil tempts* men; and that they have power, and are at liberty either to *comply with* or *reject* his temptations. So that men's being abſolutely ſubjected to the power of the devil and their own luſts amounts juſt to nothig at all. In the Doctor's firſt tract, men's being abſolutely ſubjected to the power of the devil and their own luſts ſeems to be conſidered and ranged among the terrible effects of the fall. But, in this view of the caſe, it is no effect of the fall at all; it is the condition of man, whether *ſtanding*, or *fallen*, whether with, or without, *ſupervening grace*, except ſupervening grace *irreſiſtibly* determines men to action; which, I preſume, the Doctor will not affirm, becauſe, I think, he has elſewhere declar'd the contrary. Appetites and paſſions, and being tempted, and likewiſe a power

and liberty to indulge or controul thoſe appetites and paſſions, and to comply with or reject temptations, took place in our firſt parents, *antecedent* to their trangreſſion; and this was their caſe, after they had tranſgreſſed. And the caſe muſt be always the ſame with man, whilſt he is *conſtituted* and *circumſtanced* as he is, and whilſt *agency* or *liberty* take place in him; and, therefore, I cannot conceive to what end the Doctor introduced thoſe terms, *viz.* men's being abſolutely ſubjected to the power of the devil and their own luſts, except it were to *amuſe* and *miſlead* his reader. Thus, I have conſider'd the caſe of man in the fall upon Dr. *Morgan*'s ſcheme, with reſpect to what man *has*, *viz. natural liberty*. I now come to conſider his caſe, with reſpect to what *he has not*, viz. *moral agency*.

By the *want* of moral agency in man, I underſtand the Doctor means, that man in the fall without ſupervening grace, is *incapable* of diſcerning, betwixt good and evil, in a *moral ſenſe*; that is, man is incapable of diſcerning, that to ſuccour and relieve the diſtreſſed, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and the like, are actions which are *kind* and *good*, and therefore, *proper* for him to perform. He is incapable of diſcerning, that to do as he would be done by, to make a grateful acknowledgment of a benefit received, to honour and reverence a benefactor and the like, are actions which are *right* and *fit*, and, therefore; *worthy* of his performance. He is incapable of diſcerning, that to ſlander and revile his neighbour, to invade his property, or to commit adultery, murder, and the like, are actions which are *wrong* and *evil*, and, therefore, ought to be avoided. And, as this is the *condition* of man in the fall, according to Dr. *Morgan*; ſo, according to him, man is tranſlated out of this into another ſtate, *viz.* that

of

of moral agency, by *ſupervening grace*; which grace is extended *univerſally to all*, tho', according to his *firſt* tract, the poor *Hottentots* are excepted; and, according to his *laſt* performance, it is very *partially* adminiſter'd; becauſe ſome perſons, for want of ſepervening grace, remain in *invincible ignorance*, with reſpect to ſome points, and upon others the effects of the fall remain in *part*. For tho' they can reaſon juſtly, in *ſome* caſes, yet they are *mad*, with reſpect to other; tho' they can *govern* and *reſtrain* their appetites and paſſions, in ſome inſtances, yet thoſe appetites and paſſions are *invincible*, in others, according as ſupervening grace is afforded or witheld from them. And hereby I think the Doctor, whether he intends it, or not, is giving a moſt fatal wound to *religion* and *virtue*, and doing ſuch *injury* to mankind, as he may never be able to repair, by his pointing out to men a way to *excuſe* and *juſtify* themſelves in the practice of every *vileneſs*. For will not every man, who follows his vicious inclinations, be glad to have this to plead *to*, and *for himſelf*, *viz.* that in thoſe inſtances, in which his actions appear to be criminal, ſupervening grace was *withheld* from him; that his appetite or his paſſion interpoſed and *forced* him to action; and that it was not in his power to reſtrain it, and conſequently, that he is wholly *unaccountable*, in thoſe inſtances? ſo that a man may go into the *vileſt actions*, and yet have wherewith to render his mind perfectly *eaſy* and *quiet*, and be free from all *reluctancy* in, and after the performance of them. And if this were the caſe, which, ſurely, it is not, I cannot ſee how our *governours* can be juſtified in *puniſhing* thoſe perſons, who tranſgreſs the law; becauſe, in every ſuch inſtance, for any thing they know, ſupervening grace may have been *witheld*, invincible *appetite* or *paſſion* may have taken place, and

it may not have been in the perſon's power to have done otherwiſe. And as the Doctor will have it, that he is pleading the cauſe of *chriſtianity*; ſo, I think, it will be proper for him to conſider *what cauſe* he has been pleading here. And here I beg leave to obſerve, that by *invincible* appetites and paſſions, I underſtand the Doctor to mean *irreſtrainable* appetites and paſſions; other wiſe I think thoſe terms ſerve only to *amuſe*. And if irreſtrainable be intended, then, natural liberty is *loſt* and *gone*; tho', I think, *natural liberty*, *abſolute ſubjection*, and *invincible* appetites and paſſions, ſerve the purpoſe of ſo many *puppets* to the Doctor, which he makes to appear, or diſappear, as either ſide of his contradictory ſcheme requires.

Thus I have taken a view of the *condition* of man in the fall, as the caſe is repreſented by Dr. *Morgan*; and tho' I readily yield to the Doctor, that this is, *in part* Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme, becauſe part of what the Doctor has advanced will unavoidably follow from the principles Mr. *Barclay* has laid down; yet this is by no means a *vindication* of that *author*, becauſe the very *reverſe* to *ſome of this* is likewiſe a part of his ſcheme. Mr. *Barclay* allows that man in the fall, without ſupervening grace, is a *rational creature*; that he has reaſon as a *natural faculty* of his ſoul, by which he can diſcern things that are *rational*; that he has a *ſinful nature*, is a *ſinner*, and the like; all which neceſſarily ſuppoſe *moral agency*. So that Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme ſtands *juſtly* charged with *confuſion* and *contradiction*, notwithſtanding Dr. *Morgan*'s attempts to *defend* it. And tho' the Doctor pretends, that his ſcheme of the condition of man in the fall is the *true ſcripture account* of the matter, yet in this, I think, the ſcriptures are *injured*; becauſe I am perſuaded, that, if you will examine them with *care* and *attention*, you will not be able

to

to diſcover any ſuch thing. According to the account there given, the *conduct* of *Adam* and *Eve* beſpeaks them as much moral agents, *immediately after* their eating the forbidden fruit, as *before*; and thus they continued all their lives, for any thing that appears to the contrary; ſo that it does not appear, that the fall had any *ſuch effect* upon them, as to *deſtroy* their *moral agency*. And thus it has been with their *poſterity* thro' all ages, excepting ſome *few individuals*, in which the caſe has been otherwiſe, thro' ſome *defect* or *diſorder* in the *particular conſtitutions* of thoſe individuals. And as *Adam* and *Eve* were the common parents of mankind, from which our ſpecies deriv'd their *conſtitutions*; ſo our *reaſoning faculty*, which with the power of ſelf-motion conſtitutes us *moral agents*, grows up and ripens with the *human conſtitution*; is diſorder'd and recover'd *by*, and *with* the diſorder and recovery of *that conſtitution*; weakens and decays with it, and the like. All which make it as *evident*, and are as *good proof* that moral agency is the reſult of the human conſtitution, and not of any ſupervening grace, as the nature of the thing will admit; it ſtands upon the ſame foot with, and is proved the ſame way, as *ſeeing*, or *hearing*, or any other power of the mind is proved to be the *reſult* of the human conſtitution. And this, I preſume, will paſs for proof with others, however it may, with reſpect to Dr. *Morgan*; and poſſibly with him too, notwithſtanding his *demand* of proof, in the preſent caſe. For tho' he maintains that his ſcheme is *true chriſtianity*; that his performance is a defence of *chriſtianity itſelf*, and the like fine things, with which he embelliſhes and ſets off his diſcourſe; yet, to do him juſtice, I think, he does not pretend that it is the *truth* of the *caſe*, but chuſes to make the *Bible* rather than *himſelf* anſwerable for

the ſcheme he has advanced. And whatever concern the Doctor is under to ſupport and maintain chriſtianity; yet, I think, and I am not ſingular in my opinion, that his performances manifeſtly tend to *ſubvert* it, by his fathering ſuch principles upon the chriſtian revelation, as render it *juſtly contemptible*.

What end Dr. *Morgan* had in view, in his engaging in this controverſy, I do not pretend to judge of; but this I ſay, that as he has uſed me *ill*, without any *provocation*; ſo he has *injured* the chriſtian religion, under a ſhow of *defending it*. For what can render it more ridiculous, than that *wild* and *confuſed contradictory* ſcheme which he charges it with; in which man in the fall is conſider'd as having the *capacity of natural reaſon itſelf*, and likewiſe that he has *natural liberty*, and yet is *deſtitute* of *moral agency?* That is to ſay, man has what conſtitutes him a *moral agent*, and yet *wants* moral agency. Again, man in the fall has natural liberty, and yet is abſolutely ſubjected to the power of the devil and his own luſts; he has natural liberty, and yet his appetites and paſſions are invincible; that is, man in the fall has *natural liberty*, but *is not at liberty to uſe it*. This is confuſion and contradiction, and thus it will continue to be, except the Doctor by ſome very *nice diſtinction*, like that betwixt *certainty* and *abſolute* certainty, can diſcharge it from it. However, to conclude the matter, I will leave it to the world to judge betwixt us, who is doing the greateſt *honour* or *diſhonour*, *ſervice* or *diſſervice*, to the chriſtian religion. And now to proceed,

Mr. *Beaven* has likewiſe appeared, a *ſecond* time, in Mr. *Barclay*'s *defence*; though, I think, to as little purpoſe as at *firſt*. I ſhall not follow him thro' all the *windings* and *diviſions*, by which he either *diverts* or *perplexes* the queſtion, but only give

give a ſhort view of the caſe; and thereby you will ſee the *confuſion* of his *ſcheme* and the *groundleſneſs* of his *triumphs*. Man, as I have elſewhere ſhewn, is, in his natural capacity, a *moral agent*; that is, he has in him the faculties of *intelligence* and *activity*; intelligence, by which he is capable of *thinking* or *taking in ideas*, of diſcerning and judging of the fitneſs or unfitneſs, the good or evil of actions, in a *moral ſenſe*, or when taken in a moral view; and activity, by which he is capable of *motion* or *action*, that is, of *moving* his own body, and other bodies thereby, to the performance of ſuch actions, and the ſerving ſuch purpoſes, whether good, or evil, in a *moral ſenſe*, and under that * conſideration, as he voluntarily chuſes to apply them to, from ſuch motives as are preſent to his mind, and are to him the *ground* and *reaſon* of thoſe actions. This is evidently the caſe, with reſpect to *moral agency*; and this is evidently the caſe of *man*, as he is a moral agent. And from hence it will follow, not only that man has natural ability, or an inherent power to do both *good* and *evil*, in a moral ſenſe, and under that conſideration; but alſo that he has natural ability or inherent power to do *all* that good and evil, which comes within the reach of his agency; and, conſequently, he has natural ability to do *all* that good which is his *duty* to do, or that is *neceſſary* to render him *acceptable* to his Maker. For as no good action can poſſibly be a man's duty, which is above his agency to perform; ſo God is not ſuch an *unreaſonable* Being as to make ſuch actions *neceſſary* to his acceptance.

* By [under that conſideration] I only intend [known to be ſuch.]

If

If it ſhould be aſked, whether God may not require ſome actions from men, which are *above* their natural liberty to perform, and by a *ſupernatural operation* enable them to perform thoſe actions? and, in ſuch a caſe, whether it is not mens *duty* to perform them? and whether ſuch performance be not *neceſſary* to render them acceptable to God? I *anſwer*; what God *may* do, and what he *does do*, are *two* diſtinct queſtions or caſes. God may, if he pleaſe, require a blind man to *diſtinguiſh colours*, and a cripple to *walk*, and he may give *ſight* to the one and *ſtrength* to the other, for the performance of them; but that he does do this doth not appear, at leaſt, but in extraordinary caſes. The laws, which God hath given men to direct their behaviour by, require the performance only of *ſuch actions*, as come within the reach of *human agency*, conſidering every man's *circumſtances* and *condition* in life, and not ſuch as are *above* the reach of that agency. And if any man thinks otherwiſe, then, ſurely, it lies upon him to produce thoſe inſtances, and ſhew in *what caſes* God requires more from men than they have natural ability to perform. And, if there are any ſuch inſtances, this does not render men more acceptable to God than otherwiſe they would be; becauſe our acceptableneſs does not ariſe from the *largeneſs* or the *increaſe* of our abilities, but from the *good diſpoſition* there is in us to make a *right uſe* of the ability we have, whether it be great or ſmall, natural or ſupernatural. And therefore in all ſuch caſes, ſupernatural ability is not neceſſary to render men acceptable to God, but only to perform *ſuch actions*, and to ſerve *ſuch purpoſes*, as, without that ability, they were not capable of doing. So that a man will be equally acceptable to God in the *right uſe* of his *natural ability*, as in the right uſe of that and of all the ſupernatural ability, which

which may be ſuppoſed to be added to it. And as man is a moral agent, ſo he is hereby perfectly *free* and at *liberty*, either to *neglect*, to make a *right* uſe of, or to *abuſe* his faculties, as he pleaſes. All *force*, whether it be to good, or to evil, being abſolutely *inconſiſtent* with and *deſtructive* of ſuch agency; and every thing, ſhort of force, being no other than *excitement*; man, therefore, as a moral agent, has and muſt have *power*, and be at *liberty*, either to *follow* or *reject* exery excitement, which is made preſent to his mind, either by argument, or any other way; and whether what he is excited to be good, or evil.

If it ſhould be aſked, as in pages 23, 24, of Mr. *Beaven*'s tract, *viz.* "If goodneſs be thought "ſo *inſeparable* from the nature of God, as that it "is not poſſible for him to *do evil*; what, if evil "be thought ſo *inſeparable* from the *ſinful nature* "of fallen and degenerate man, as that it is not "poſſible for him to *do good*, regarding ſpiritual "things, without the good and *ſupernatural ope-* "*ration* of God in him, to enlighten and quicken "him thereunto; is this to *limit* the agency of "man, more than the agency of God is ſuppoſed "to be limited, as above?" I *anſwer*: If this were admitted, then, there would not be agency, but *fatality*, or being *acted upon* by ſome foreign agent, in either caſe. For if God were under a neceſſity of *doing good*, and men were under a like neceſſity of *doing evil*, they would not be agents. And the good, or evil, which would be performed by their inſtrumentality, would not be good, or evil, in a *moral ſenſe*; that is, God would not be a *good* Being, nor man an *evil* being, upon the account of it; agency and neceſſity being directly *oppoſite* and *contrary* to each other, whether Mr. *Beaven* diſcerns it, or not. And if *neceſſity* does not take place, in either caſe, but

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moral agency; and God is a *good Being*, upon the account of that good which is performed by him; and man an *evil being*, upon the account of that evil which he performs; then, it will unavoidably follow, that God has *power* and is at *liberty* to *do evil*, and that man has *power* and is at *liberty* to *do good*. And tho' there is not any thing in nature, which affords an *excitement* or *temptation* to God to *do evil*, and from hence ariſes a *moral certainty*, that he never will do it; yet this is by no means the caſe of man, with reſpect to *good*; becauſe nature affords a *proper motive* or excitement to him, as a moral agent, to *do good*. And he is at liberty to act from that motive, and ſo can do it, if *he will*; and that too in things *ſpiritual*, if by *ſpiritual* be meant what is good in a *moral ſenſe*. But if that be not meant, then, the diſtinction of things *ſpiritual*, I think, is an *amuſement*; it is uſing a term, without any fixed idea to it.

If it ſhould be aſked, whether man can be an *agent* and a *patient* alſo? I *anſwer*: He can be both in *different* actions, but not in the ſame action. A *phyſician* may recommend to me frequent walking, as proper for my health; and, in my *receiving* his advice, I am a *patient only*; and if I *follow* that advice, and walk accordingly, in this I am an *agent only*. The caſe is the ſame, if *God* ſhould kindly interpoſe, and make any motive or propoſition preſent to my mind; in this I am a *patient only*. And if that motive or propoſition be the *ground* or *reaſon* of my acting, in that action, I am an *agent only*. To be an agent and a patient, in the *ſame action*, is a manifeſt *contradiction*; it is to act and not to act in the ſame action. So that, in every good action which man performs, he is an *agent only*; and if *God* were to interpoſe and perform that good action *in*, and *by him*, in that caſe, he would be a *patient only*.

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If it ſhould be aſked, whether *two agents* can *co-operate* or *work together*, in producing the *ſame actions?* I *anſwer:* that *two* agents may act together, and produce the *ſame effect*, but not the *ſame action*. *Two* men may act together, and by their united ſtrength *lift* a *weight*, or *ring* a *bell*, which neither of them could do ſingly; but, then, in this caſe, their actions are as *diſtinct* as their perſons; the one acts, and the other acts, and both their actions produce the *ſame effect*. The caſe is the ſame, if *God* ſhould interpoſe and co-operate or act with man, in producing any effect. As far as the agency of *God* is concerned, ſo far it is God's *action*; and as far as *man*'s agency is concerned, ſo far it is man's *action*, and no farther. Neither is man *commendable* or *blameable* in any action, any farther than his *own agency* is exerted in that action. And, here, I preſume, my reader will ſee how *vain* and *trifling* Mr. *Beaver* is, in garniſhing his book with this general title, *viz. God's Agency and Man's Agency co-working, in the Salvation of Man*. For if by *co-working* he means that *God* and *man* co-operate, to produce the *ſame action*; this is an *abſurdity*, and is, therefore, *falſe*, as I have before ſhewn. And if he means that God and man co-operate, to produce the *ſame effect*; tho' this may be true, yet it is not to the purpoſe; becauſe man's *acceptableneſs* to God does not ariſe from what God does, but only from what *man himſelf* does, in producing that effect. God may repreſent or make preſent to the ſinner's mind a view of the *vileneſs* of his *conduct*, and the *danger* he is in, upon that account; and this may be to the ſinner the *ground* and *reaſon* of his repentance and reformation. Here we ſee *God acts*, and *man acts*; but, then, it is not what God does, but only what the *ſinner* does, which renders him

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the *object* of divine acceptance, and which is the *ground* and *reaſon* of God's favour to him. God repreſents to the ſinner a *view* of his condition; but, then, if the ſinner does not *repent* and *amend*, upon that view, which is *wholly his own act*, God's act will be ſo far from ſaving him, that, on the contrary, it will be an aggravation of his *condemnation*. And, in this caſe, there is no *new*, no *ſupernatural ability* afforded or added to the ſinner, neither does God's act enable him to do what he could not do, antecedent to, or without that act; but only hereby he is applyed to in a *proper way*, as he is a *moral agent*, in order to prevail upon him to do what he *could do*, but *would not*, or *did not*. And if ſuch a *co-working*, as aforeſaid, be what Mr. *Beaven* intends, in the work of man's ſalvation, then, his putting the aforeſaid *title* to his book, and offering it as a *rejoinder* to mine, is *foul practiſing*; becauſe it is what I have not oppoſed. The queſtion betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay* is not, whether the agency of God is concerned, in the ſalvation of man? but whether *man* in his natural capacity, as man, has in him a natural ability, or an inherent power to *do good*, *in a moral ſenſe*, without a ſupernatural influence to enable him thereunto? And this queſtion is ſuch a *choke-pill* to Mr. *Beaven*, that he had rather introduce *twenty* other queſtions, than confine himſelf to it; which, in the preſent caſe, he ought to do. And,

As man is at liberty to *neglect*, to make a *right uſe* of, or to *abuſe* his *natural faculties*, as he pleaſes; ſo, if he does neglect or abuſe them, this does not *deſtroy* his *faculties*, nor *diſable* him from making a right uſe of them. If a man is *ſlothful*, and thereby is *ignorant* of what he otherwiſe might and would have known, he does not hereby fall under a *neceſſity* of always continuing ſo, except ſome foreign

reign agent interpoſe and *rouſe* him out of it; but, on the contrary, he has *power*, and is at *liberty* to *rouſe himſelf*, that is, to call his neglected faculties into *exerciſe*, and to uſe the means for the attainment of that *knowledge*, which, thro' his ſloth and negligence, he has hitherto been ignorant of. In like manner, if a man ſhould invade his neighbour's *property*, or perform any other *vicious* action, or if he ſhould *neglect* what was his *duty* to do; in ſuch a caſe, he does not hereby fall under a *neceſſity* of going on in that practice always, except ſome foreign agent interpoſe and *prevent* him; but, on the contrary, he has *power*, and is at *liberty* to look back upon his actions or his neglect of duty, to ſee the unfitneſs and vileneſs of it, and to correct and amend his ways for the future. And, if he ſhould *perſiſt* in his wickedneſs, his *after-actions* are as much the produce of *choice* or *election*, as the *firſt*. He had power, and was at liberty, to have choſe and done the contrary; and this renders thoſe actions *criminal*, which otherwiſe they would not be. And, therefore, ſuppoſing *all mankind*, without any exception, have *abuſed* their *agency*, that is, have entered into a wicked courſe of life, and *careleſly* gone on in it, without reflecting on their conduct, or have *obſtinately* perſiſted in it, notwithſtanding ſuch reflections; what advantage will this afford to Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme? Why, truly, none at all; becauſe the *neglect* or *abuſe* of man's natural faculties does not *deſtroy* or *take away* the right uſe of them; he has power, and is at liberty rightly to uſe them, *after he has abuſed them*, as well as before that abuſe; and becauſe the queſtion betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay* is not, whether all men have abuſed their faculties? but whether *man in the fall* has natural ability, without a ſupernatural influence, *rightly* to uſe them,

them, or not? So that here is no ſuch *conceſſion* in favour of Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme, as Mr. *Beaven* vainly boaſts of. But, ſays Mr. *Beaven*, if all mankind have abuſed their faculties, then, ſupernatural influences are *neceſſary*, or *uſeful* to the ſalvation of all. Now, if this be admitted, what advantage would Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme receive hereby? Why juſt as much as in the former caſe. Supernatural influences are neceſſary, or uſeful to all; but, then, what are they uſeful for? Not, ſurely, to put men in a capacity of *moral agency*; becauſe that they are *without* thoſe influences; not to furniſh men with ability to do their *duty*, becauſe they muſt have ſuch ability, *antecedent* to the divine interpoſition; for otherwiſe there could be no ſuch thing as *duty* in the caſe; but they are uſeful, or neceſſary, to *perſuade* men, if they will be prevailed upon; that being the ſubject of their *own choice*, to make a *right uſe* of that ability they already have. And as the queſtion betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay* is no, whether ſupernatural influences are uſeful, or neceſſary, to anſwer the purpoſe aforeſaid? but only, whether man *has*, or *has not* natural *ability* for the performance of his duty? ſo the pretended *conceſſions*, which Mr. *Beaven* makes the grounds of his *triumphs* over me, are of no ſervice to Mr. *Barclay*'s cauſe. And if my conceſſions are ſuch as Mr. *Beaven* pretends, ſo that Mr. *Barclay* and I are of the ſame opinion herein; how, then, come my principles to be ſo very *injurious* and *hurtful*, as they are repreſented to be? And how comes Mr. *Beaven* to repreſent me as "*diſclaiming* "and *exploding* all ſupernatural help from Jeſus "Chriſt to men, even under the moſt inveterate "habits of wickedneſs; and that with an open "face too? *page* 38. Surely, if Mr. *Barclay*'s principles and mine are ſo nearly allied, with reſpect

ſpect to ſupernatural influences, as Mr. *Beaven* repreſents them; then, what he has ſaid above bears hard upon Mr. *Barclay*'s principles, as well as mine; or rather, if the caſe be, as he repreſents it, then, it is an *unjuſt* charge upon us both. But to return:

As man is capable of neglecting or abuſing his faculties, and thereby of incurring the divine diſpleaſure; ſo he is capable of being *applied to* by other agents, in order to his repentance and reformation, and thereby to reſtore him again to the divine favour. He is capable of being *awakened*, or *called upon*, to conſider his ways, to reflect upon his conduct, to ſee how vile and wicked his actions are, and what unhappineſs and miſery he is drawing upon himſelf. And this is the end and purpoſe which *divine revelation* and *divine ſupernatural influences* are ſubſervient to, in the preſent caſe. So that the uſefulneſs of ſupernatural influences does not ariſe from man's *incapacity* to reflect upon and conſider his ways, nor from a *natural incapacity* to correct and amend them; becauſe he is always capable of theſe, as he is a *moral agent* and an *accountable creature*; his *natural ability* to do good and evil, in a moral ſenſe, being the ſame both *with* and *without* a ſupernatural influence. But the uſefulneſs of ſuch influences ariſes from mens *voluntarily* perſiſting in a wicked courſe of life; for when that is their caſe, as it is exceeding *kind* and *good* in God that he will uſe any means to bring them to repentance and reformation; ſo his applying to them, as above, is a *proper way* to work upon them, as *moral agents*, to bring them to that repentance and reformation. And as God's kindly interpoſing, as aforeſaid, is not an *evidence againſt*, but *for* man's having natural ability to do his duty; ſo St. *Paul* uſes it as an argument to perſuade men to a *right uſe* and application of that

ability: *Work out*, ſays he, *your own ſalvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Which is as if he had ſaid; ſeeing *Almighty God*, who reaps no advantage from the good actions of men, and yet, out of mere *good-will* to them, kindly interpoſes and awakens in them a ſenſe of what they ought both *to will* and *to do*; how much more ought men to uſe their utmoſt *care* and *diligence* to conduct their actions a-right, foraſmuch as hereby they purſue their *own good*, and ſecure to themſelves their *own ſalvation*? For if *God* ſhews *ſuch a regard* for the happineſs of his creatures; then, certainly, thoſe creatures ought to ſhew the *utmoſt care* and *regard* for themſelves.

Thus, Sir, I have given you a ſhort view of the caſe, that is, of the *natural condition of man in the fall*; and, I think, have diſcharged it from that *confuſion* and *abſurdity*, which Mr. *Beaven* and his ſcheme have perplex'd it with. What remains is to inquire, wherein the moſt *material difference* lies betwixt me and Mr. *Barclay*, with reſpect to the condition of man in the fall; what the *queſtion* ariſing from hence is; and what *proof* has been offered on either ſide.

Mr. *Barclay* maintains, that man, as he is in the fall, *cannot do good*, with reſpect to things ſpiritual, by which I underſtand what is good in a moral ſenſe, without a ſupernatural influence; and that, without ſuch influence, he is either by his own natural compoſition, or by the agency of the ſerpent, *neceſſarily determined to do evil*; and that this is the natural condition of *all mankind*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This, I think, appears plainly to be his ſenſe, if his words have any *fixed ideas* to them; and, therefore, all that complaint which has been made againſt me, of *miſrepreſenting* Mr. *Barclay*,

is

is perfectly groundleſs. And that this is a *juſt* repreſentation of Mr. *Barclay*'s, Mr. *Beaven*'s, and the *Quakers* ſenſe herein, is moſt evident from Mr. *Beaven*'s own repreſentation thereof; allowing him to be a proper judge in the caſe. His words are as follows; *page* 23, 24. "If *goodneſs* be thought ſo "*inſeparable* from the nature of God, as that it is "not poſſible for him to *do evil*; what, if *evil* be "thought ſo *inſeparable* from the *ſinful nature* of "fallen and degenerate man, as that it is not poſ-"ſible for him to *do good*, regarding ſpiritual "things, without the good and *ſupernatural* ope-"ration of God in him, to enlighten and quicken "him thereunto? Is this to *limit* the *agency* of "*man*, more than the agency of God is ſuppoſed "to be limited, as above?" Here we ſee Mr. *Beaven* conſiders *evil* ſo inſeparable from the *ſinful nature* of fallen man, as that it is not *poſſible* for him to do *good*, regarding ſpiritual things, without a ſupernatural influence. Which is the ſame in effect with what I have ſet forth in the *two propoſitions*, by which I have expreſſed Mr. *Barclay*'s ſenſe of this matter. And tho' the repreſentation, which is here given of the condition of the *natural man*, be put by way of *query*; yet, I think, it may juſtly be preſumed, that Mr. *Beaven* intended to expreſs *his*, and Mr. *Barclay*'s, and the *Quakers* ſenſe of the helpleſs condition of *man in the fall* hereby; or elſe his arguing from a *neceſſity* of doing good, and an *impoſſibility* of doing evil in *God*, for a like neceſſity of *doing evil*, and an impoſſibility of *doing good* in *man*, regarding ſpiritual things, without a ſupernatural influence, is no way to his purpoſe. And as Mr. *Barclay*'s ſenſe of the condition of man in the fall is, as I have repreſented it above; ſo I maintain, in oppoſition to him, that man, as *man*, or in his *natural capacity*, is a *moral agent*, and, as ſuch, has

in him natural ability, or an inherent power to do both *good* and *evil*, in a *moral ſenſe*, without a ſupernatural influence; yea, that he has natural ability to do *all* that *good* which is his *duty* to do, or that is *neceſſary* to render him acceptable to his Maker. So that the ſtate of the caſe or point in controverſy is reſolved into this ſhort iſſue, *viz.* whether man, in his natural condition as man, *can*, or *cannot* do good, in a *moral ſenſe*, without a ſupernatural influence? The caſe is plain and obvious, and may eaſily be brought to a deciſion; it is but to prove the *negative*, or the *affirmative* ſide, of this ſingle queſtion, and then the controverſy *is*, or at leaſt *ought* to be, at an end.

I have offered what I eſteem *proof*, on the *affirmative* ſide; and ſhewn that man in his natural capacity, without a ſupernatural influence, is a *moral agent*. Now, admitting that I have proved this point, it will unavoidably follow, that man has *power*, and is at *liberty* not only to do both good and evil, in a moral ſenſe, without a ſupernatural influence; but alſo that he has natural ability, or an inherent power, to do *all* that *good* which is his *duty* to do, or is neceſſary to render him *acceptable* to his *Maker*, without ſuch influences. For whatever *impotency* may attend our ſpecies upon the *fall* of *Adam*, if that fall has not *deſtroyed* our *moral agency*, as it is moſt evident it has not; then, it will unavoidably follow, that the ſtate of man is as I have repreſented it; becauſe, how weak ſoever man may be ſuppoſed to be, his duty muſt bear a *proportion* to the ability he has, whether it be great, or ſmall. And, therefore, ſuppoſing an action to be morally good, yet if a man has not ability to perform that action, or to diſcover the moral goodneſs of it, then, that action *cannot* be his duty in thoſe circumſtances, neither will God make the performance of it *neceſſary* to

his

his *acceptance.* The ſum of the point is this; I have proved that man, in his natural capacity, is a *moral agent*, and, as ſuch, has power and is at liberty to do *all that good* which is his duty to do, without a ſupernatural influence; and, therefore, can do it, if he *will*; and, conſequently, that ſupernatural influences are, or may be *neceſſary*, or *uſeful*, not to render men capable of doing their duty, that implying a *contradiction*; becauſe, where there is not a *capacity*, there can be no *duty*; but to prevail upon men to do what was their duty, and, conſequently, what they were capable of performing, *antecedent* to ſuch influence.

Mr. *Beaven*, in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, oppoſes me. But what has he done? has he *invalidated* the *evidence* I brought to prove my point? or has he proved the contrary? that is, has he ſhewed that the *natural reſult* of the conſtitution of man *is not* moral agency, and that *man*, in his natural capacity *is not* a moral agent? No; this he has not done; this he could not do; and yet this was his point; and, if he had done this, then, it would have follow'd that man, as he is in the fall, *would not* have had a *ſinful nature*, *would not* have been *a ſinner*; which upon the *Quakers* ſcheme he is ſuppoſed to be. But, then, the queſtion will return, what has Mr. *Beaven* done? To which, I think, this general anſwer may be given; that he has run into *diviſions*, by which he has either *diverted* or *perplexed* the queſtion. He pretends, that I have made ſeveral *conceſſions*, in favour of Mr. *Barclay*, the *groundleſneſs* of which I have before ſhewn, and likewiſe that man may be an *agent* and a *patient alſo*; and that *God and man co-work*, *in the ſalvation of man*, and the like; all which are *foreign* to the queſtion, as I have ſhewn. He likewiſe vouches the authority of *ſcripture*, for his opinion; but, ſurely, the ſcriptures cannot

make a *falſe propoſition true*, which is the preſent caſe; tho', I grant, he is not ſingular herein; almoſt *all errors* among chriſtians being father'd upon the *ſcriptures*.

Upon the whole, I obſerve, that as Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme ſtands charged with *error*, *confuſion*, and *contradiction*; ſo Mr. *Beaven* has not been able to *free* it from this charge. And if he ſhould think fit to appear any more, in Mr. *Barclay*'s defence, I deſire him to come to the point, which, as yet, he has avoided. And I here, once more, remind him what the point is, *viz.* not what man is, and what his abilities are *by*, and *with*, and *under* a ſupernatural influence; but what man is, and what his abilities are, conſider'd *abſtractedly from*, and *without* ſuch influence. Mr. *Barclay* maintains, and Mr. *Beaven* has undertaken to defend him herein, that man as *man*, or man in the *fall*, is either by his *own natural compoſition*, or by the *agency* of the *ſerpent*, unavoidably determin'd to *do evil*; and that he cannot *do good*, regarding ſpiritual things, by which I underſtand what is good in a moral ſenſe, without a ſupernatural influence. This I call an *error*, and a *miſrepreſentation of human nature*; and, I think, have proved it to be ſo, by ſhewing that man, in his natural capacity, is a *moral agent*, and, conſequently, that human nature is not what Mr. *Barclay* has repreſented it to be. Now, if Mr. *Beaven* has any thing farther to offer which will *invalidate* the *evidence*, whereby I have proved my ſide of the queſtion, and which will prove the contrary; I ſhall think myſelf concerned to conſider it. But, if he ſhall proceed in *perplexing* and *diverting* the queſtion, then, I preſume, it will not be expected that I ſhould follow him, in ſuch a wild gooſe-chaſe.

What I have farther to obſerve is, that as in Mr.

Mr. *Barclay*'s, Mr. *Beaven*'s, and the *Quakers* ſcheme, man in the fall is conſider'd as *incapable* of doing good, regarding ſpiritual things, without a ſupernatural influence; and that he is unavoidably determin'd to *do evil*; whilſt at the ſame time *man* in the *fall* is allow'd to be a *rational creature*, who has reaſon, as a *natural faculty* of his ſoul, by which he can diſcern things that are *rational*; that he has a *ſinful nature*, is a *ſinner*, and the like; this, taken together, I call *confuſion* and *contradiction*; and, I preſume, it evidently appears to be ſo to every conſidering man, who attends to it. And as Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme is *confuſed* and *contradictory*, ſo this I particularly recommended to the conſideration of his adherents, in my *ſecond* letter, preſuming they ought either to *clear* his ſcheme from that confuſion and contradiction, or elſe to *give it up*. But, ſeeing they do neither, this gives me an occaſion of troubling you with a *fourth* letter, in order to enquire into the *cauſe* of ſuch a procedure, which I take to be this. The *Quakers* having been train'd up in the belief of this doctrine, *viz.* that man, conſidered barely as man, cannot *do good*, regarding things ſpiritual, without a ſupernatural influence; and that he is unavoidably determin'd to *do evil*; and, then, reading the *Bible* with their minds *prepoſſeſſed* with this opinion, they are led to think that it is plainly and clearly taught therein. And as the *Bible* is allow'd to be the *rule* of *truth*, and the *word* of *God*, ſo whatever doctrine is therein contained muſt be *truth*; and, conſequently, whilſt the *Bible* appears to them in *this light*, the way to their *conviction* is *barr'd* up. That, then, which lies before me, is not to make good my ſide of the queſtion, that being ſufficiently cleared and proved already; but to remove, if it can be done, what ſtands in the way of the *Quakers conviction*.

The *Bible*, like a *pack-horſe*, is made to bear every burden, which *weak* or *deſigning men* are pleaſed to lay upon it; there not being any doctrine, how *abſurd* and *ridiculous* ſoever, when adopted into this, or that, or the other ſcheme of chriſtianity, but its vouchers have ſome *texts* of *ſcripture* to father it upon. Thus, the doctrines of *tranſubſtantiation*, and of *abſolute election* and *reprobation*, are, by thoſe who adhere to them, ſaid to be contained in the *ſcripture*; tho' the one of theſe is *repugnant to*, and thereby is ſhewn to be falſe by our *ſenſes*, and the other by our *reaſon*. And tho' perhaps, there has not been any ſet of men, who have been *more divided* in their religious opinions than the *body* of *chriſtians*; yet each and every of theſe have been ready to lay claim to the *Bible*, as a *common parent* to their principles, tho' *different* and *contradictory* to each other. And thus it is, with reſpect to the point in queſtion; it being ſuppos'd that the following propoſition, viz. *That man cannot do good, regarding ſpiritual things, without a ſupernatural influence*, is contained therein. I ſhall not, however, take upon me to examine, what is the *true ſenſe* and *meaning* of this or that text of ſcripture, with reſpect to the point in hand; this would be a work both *endleſs* and *uſeleſs*. It would be endleſs, becauſe after *ten* or *twenty* texts are examin'd, with reſpect to their *true ſenſe*, ſo many more may be introduced to be examined, and ſo on, and that, with reſpect to both ſides of the queſtion; and this, ſurely, would be an *endleſs work*. It would likewiſe be uſeleſs, with reſpect to *fixing* and *ſettling* the point in debate; becauſe, after ſuch an examination, each party may think their ſenſe of ſcripture is the *true ſenſe*, and ſo they would end where they began. This, I imagine, has often been the caſe, and is likely to be ſo now. And,

therefore,

therefore, what I propoſe is, that as the *Bible* is appealed to, as the *rule* of *truth*; ſo I ſhall, *firſt*, ſhew what *qualifications* are *abſolutely neceſſary* to take place in it, in order to render it *capable* of being ſuch a *rule*. *Secondly*, I ſhall apply this to the point in hand, by ſhewing how any propoſition which may be ſuppoſed to be contained in *ſcripture*, is affected by it. From which it will appear, that whilſt we conſider the *Bible*, as the *rule of truth*, and the *word of God*, the following propoſition, *viz. That man cannot do what is morally good, without a ſupernatural influence*, ought not to be admitted as the *ſenſe* of *ſcripture*, or as *contained therein*, and, conſequently, that the urging of texts of ſcripture, to prove the above propoſition, is *trifling* in itſelf, and is offering a manifeſt *injury* to the *Bible*. *Thirdly*, and *laſtly*, I ſhall make ſome ſhort reflections upon the whole. And,

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew, what *qualifications* are *abſolutely neceſſary* to render the *Bible capable* of being the rule of truth; I ſay, capable of being the rule of truth; for tho' thoſe qualifications do not *conſtitute* or *make* the *Bible* ſuch a rule; yet, if they were wanting, it would, in the nature of the thing, be *unqualified* for it. And, therefore, thoſe qualifications are, and muſt be abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary, to render the *Bible capable* of being the rule of truth. By the *Bible*'s being the rule of truth, I mean it to be ſuch a *juſt* and *certain* foundation of *aſſent*, as will not *deceive* us, in *all* or *any* of thoſe points which are *diſcover'd* by it, and whoſe *credibility* ariſes from, and is founded upon it. And,

Firſt, The *Bible* muſt be *conſiſtent* with the *nature* and the *truth* of things, in order to render it *capable* of being the *rule of truth*. And, here, I beg leave to re-aſſume the argument already laid down,

down, in my diſcourſe concerning *Perſecution*; and to obſerve, that if there are any propoſitions in the *Bible*, which, when rightly underſtood, are *repugnant* to the *nature*, or to the *truth* of things, all ſuch propoſitions muſt be allowed to be *falſe*. And if the *Bible* lays down a falſe propoſition in *one* inſtance, and with relation to *one* point, then, it may do the ſame in *any other* inſtance, and with relation to *any other* point. I ſay, that this *may* be the caſe, for any thing we know to the contrary; ſeeing it has not given us any *infallible rule*, by which we can certainly judge which propoſitions in the *Bible* are *true*, and which are *otherwiſe*. And from hence it will follow, that if the *Bible* be admitted as the *rule of truth*, then, the forementioned qualification muſt be admitted as an *eſſential property* of this rule; and, conſequently, every propoſition in the *Bible*, which, in its *literal* ſenſe, is repugnant to the nature, or to the truth of things, muſt be underſtood not *literally*, but *figuratively*. And, that I may not be miſunderſtood, with regard to the point in hand, I will give an inſtance; *John* vii. 38. *He that believeth on me*, ſaith Chriſt, *out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water*. Now, I ſay, that if the *Bible* be admitted as the *rule* of *truth*, then, this propoſition muſt be underſtood *figuratively*; becauſe the terms of which it is compoſed, if underſtood literally, that is, if we apply to them thoſe ideas which common uſage has fix'd to them; then, the propoſition is plainly *repugnant* to the *nature* and *truth* of things. And, *firſt*, it is repugnant to, or an impoſſibility in nature, for rivers of water to flow out of a *man's belly*; ſuppoſing, by the term *belly*, be meant that part of a man which is commonly called by that *name*; and, by the terms *rivers of water*, be meant the flowing or running of ſuch *large quantities* of water, as we commonly expreſs by the term *rivers*; which is the preſent caſe. So

that,

that, if the foremention'd propoſition be underſtood *literally*, then, it is repugnant to, and an impoſſibility in nature, and, therefore, is *abſolutely falſe*. Again, it is repugnant to the truth of things, that is, it is a propoſition manifeſtly falſe in fact; ſeeing believing in Chriſt has not, in any one inſtance, produced ſuch an effect, as that out of the believer's belly have flowed *rivers of water*, as aforeſaid. And as any propoſition, which is repugnant to the nature, or truth of things, cannot poſſibly be true; ſo from hence it will follow, that the *Bible*'s being conſiſtent with the nature and truth of things is *abſolutely* and *eſſentially neceſſary*, to render it *capable* of being the rule of truth. Again,

Secondly, Another qualification *abſolutely neceſſary*, to render the *Bible capable* of being the rule of truth, is its being *uniform* and *conſiſtent with itſelf*. If the *Bible* ſhould contain propoſitions, which, when rightly underſtood, are plainly *inconſiſtent with*, and *contradictory* to each other; then, one or other of them muſt, confeſſedly, be *falſe*. For tho' each of thoſe propoſitions, when conſider'd alone, is not repugnant to the nature of things, and ſo, in that reſpect, either of them *may* be true; yet if, when they are taken together, one is an *apparent contradiction* to the other, of neceſſity, one of them muſt be *falſe*. And if the *Bible* lays down a falſe propoſition in *one inſtance*, it may in another, as I obſerv'd above. And, conſequently, if this were the caſe, then, nothing could be *fairly* concluded from the *Bible*, and the *Bible* would juſtly be *excluded* from being the rule of truth, in any point whatever. And, as the *Bible* muſt be uniform and conſiſtent with itſelf, in order to render it *capable* of being the rule of truth; ſo, conſequently, if there are any propoſitions in it which ſeem to *claſh with*, and to *contradict* each other, then, one of theſe muſt *yield* to the other;

that

that is, the ſenſe of one or other of them muſt be *ſo changed*, from what it appears to be, as that thoſe ſeeming contradictory propoſitions may be perfectly *reconciled*. Again,

Thirdly, and *laſtly*, Another qualification *abſolutely neceſſary*, to render the *Bible capable* of being the rule of truth, is, that it muſt be a *proper application* to the *underſtandings* of *men*; by which I mean, that the author muſt *intend* to be *underſtood* in all * that is therein contained; and, conſequently, that the *Bible* muſt contain only *ſuch ſubjects*, as are diſcernible by, and come within the reach of the *human underſtanding*. And thoſe ſubjects muſt be deliver'd in *ſuch a way*, as is likely not to *miſlead*, but to *inform mankind*. For if the *Bible* was intended to be underſtood, only in *ſome* parts of it, and if the author intended that the other parts ſhould not be underſtood; then, the *Bible* is *unqualified* for being the rule of truth, in any point; becauſe it has not given us any rule by which we can judge, which parts are *intended* to be underſtood, and which not; ſo that thoſe parts of the *Bible* which ſeem to us moſt plain, and from which, we think, we receive a true information, may be the *moſt difficult*, and may only ſerve more effectually to *miſlead* us. I ſay, that this *may* be the caſe, for any thing we know, or for any grounds we have, from whence we may juſtly conclude the contrary. For as every propoſition contained in the *Bible* is expreſſed in words, which *common uſage* has fixed ideas to, and as we have no rule laid down in the *Bible*, by which we can form a judgment in the preſent caſe; ſo from hence it will follow, that we muſt be under the *greateſt uncertainty*, which propoſi-

* *Note*, I here except all prophecies out of the caſe; for as they cannot, in the nature of the thing, be evidences, until they are compleated; ſo the underſtanding them, before their completion, is of no uſe.

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tions are *intended* to be underſtood, and which not; and, therefore, if the *Bible* be admitted as the *rule* of *truth*, then, the aforeſaid qualification muſt be admitted as an *eſſential property* of this rule. And if the *Bible* was intended to be underſtood, in *all* the parts of it, then, it muſt contain only ſuch *ſubjects* as are diſcernible by, and come within the reach of the *human underſtanding*; and all ſubjects, that are above it, are neceſſarily *excluded* from the *Bible*. For tho' there may be in nature ſuch ſubjects as are above the human underſtanding, that is, of which we are not capable of taking in any ideas concerning them; yet, if there were any ſuch in the *Bible*, they would be expreſſed in words which have *certain ideas* annex'd to them by common uſage. And this would involve us in the difficulty I mention'd above; ſeeing, as I obſerv'd, we have no rule by which we can judge, which ſubjects come *within* the reach of the human underſtanding, and which are *above* it; and, conſequently, if this were the caſe, then, the *Bible* would juſtly be *excluded* from being the *rule* of *truth*, in any point whatever. Again, if the *Bible* is intended to be underſtood, in *all* the parts of it, then, the ſubjects therein contained muſt be delivered in *ſuch a way*, as is likely not to *miſlead*, but to *inform* mankind; for if there were ſome propoſitions in the ſcriptures deliver'd in ſuch a way, as naturally and apparently intended to *miſlead* us, and if the uſe of language was *perverted*, in ſome inſtances; then, it might be ſo, in a *thouſand* more, or in any inſtance which might be referr'd to, ſeeing it has not given us any *infallible rule*, by which we can judge, when it deals fairly and candidly with us, and when otherwiſe; neither is there conſtituted an *infallibae living judge*, to give an abſolute and certain determination, in the preſent caſe. And, conſequently, if this were the

caſe,

caſe, then, the ſcriptures would be juſtly *excluded* from being the rule of truth, in any point whatever. God is a Being, in whom all *moral perfections* take place, in the higheſt degree; and as he could not have any low or mean end, in giving a revelation to his creatures, ſo much leſs would he do it in a way, which naturally and apparently tended to miſlead them. The right informing our *minds*, and the right conducting our *lives*, muſt be the ends, which a wiſe and a good God had in view, in giving a revelation to mankind; and, therefore, he would certainly give it in ſuch a way, as was *moſt ſubſervient* to theſe ends. And tho' diſtance of time and place, the alteration of languages, the errors of tranſcribers and tranſlators, and a variety of other things may introduce *errors* into the text, and lay a foundation for *miſtakes*, with reſpect to the ſenſe of ſcripture; yet this does not alter the caſe, with reſpect to the *intention* of the *author*. He muſt intend it for a *publick good*, and, therefore, muſt intend that it ſhould be *underſtood*. Let us, then, take heed how we repreſent the *Bible*, as a *dark* and a *myſterious* revelation; for this is to conſider it, as intended only to put the human underſtanding upon the *rack*, and to perplex and miſlead it. Man is naturally an inquiſitive creature; and if a revelation comes forth, under the character of *divine*, this character heightens his inclination to look into it, that he may know what his Creator ſays *to him*, and *concerning him*. And as God's end, in giving a revelation, was, that it might rightly direct our minds and lives; ſo the nature of the thing requires that it be deliver'd in ſuch a way, as is moſt *plain* and *eaſy* to be underſtood. And, conſequently, if we admit the *Bible* to be the rule of truth, and the word of God, and yet conſider it, as a dark and myſterious revelation; this is to

repreſent

repreſent it, as *unworthy* of that Being whom we conſider, as its Author.

Note: Thoſe propoſitions in the *Bible*, which are *ſelf-evident*, or which are the *neceſſary reſult* of propoſitions that are ſelf-evident, that is, whoſe evidence ariſes from the *nature of things*; theſe are out of the caſe; becauſe theſe are true in themſelves, and, upon a due examination, will evidently appear to be ſo, whether the *Bible* be admitted as the rule of truth, or not. So that the propoſitions, which come into the preſent queſtion, are ſuch only. as are *diſcoverable* by the *Bible*, and whoſe *credibility* ariſes from, and is founded upon it.

If it ſhould be urged, that tho' there is not any thing deliver'd in the *Bible*, with an *intention* to miſlead mankind, nor any ſubjects contained there in, that are *abſolutely* above the reach of the human underſtanding; yet there may be ſuch as are above it. conſidering man in his *fallen ſtate*; and that *God* may interpoſe, and, by the *operation* of his *ſpirit*, enable men to underſtand the ſcriptures, and thereby to take in thoſe ſubjects, which, antecedent to his interpoſition, they were not capable of diſcerning. I *anſwer*; this is repreſenting Almighty God, as acting a very *ſtrange* part by his creatures; man is conſider'd as *fallen*, before the revelation was given, and this revelation is given him in his *fallen ſtate*, conſider'd as ſuch; yea, his being fallen is the *occaſion* of this gift of God to him; and, yet, it is ſuppoſed that *part* of it is *above* his capacity to underſtand. And this is ſo intermixed, without any *rule* of *diſtinction*, as that not any thing can be *juſtly* and *certainly* concluded from it, which muſt render it, in a great meaſure, *uſeleſs*. And ſuppoſing God does *interpoſe*, and, by his ſpirit, impreſs upon men's minds thoſe *truths*, which lie *concealed* in the ſcriptures, and give men

a *capacity* to take in thoſe ſubjects, which, antecedent to his interpoſition, they were not capable of *diſcerning*, yet this does not alter the caſe at all; becauſe it is not from the *Bible*, but from the *ſpirit*, that fallen man receive his impreſſions, his informations, and his capacity, as aforeſaid; ſo that the *Bible*, upon this ſuppoſition, is but of *little uſe* to mankind. And upon a ſuppoſition, that fallen man is under an *incapacity* to underſtand the ſcriptures; then, I would aſk, how any man can *certainly know*, or have any *rational ſatisfaction*, that the impreſſions he is under are *divine*, or that the ideas he takes in by thoſe impreſſions are *truths*, or not.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that thoſe impreſſions *evidence themſelves* to be *divine*, and conſequently, that the propoſitions, convey'd or diſcovered by thoſe impreſſions, are *divine truths*. I *anſwer*; that if thoſe impreſſions evidence themſelves to the *men* who receive them, that they are *divine*; then, this ſuppoſes ſome *common principle*, which all impreſſions are to be *tried* and *judged* of by, and likewiſe a *capacity*, in fallen man to *examine* and *try* thoſe impreſſions by that principle, and to *diſtinguiſh* and *judge*, whether they are divine, or not. But, then, this is giving to fallen man, with one hand, what has been *taken from him* with the other; this is *allowing* him that capacity, which he is ſuppoſed to be *deſtitute* of. For if there be ſome *common principle*, which all impreſſions are to be tried by, and if there be in fallen man a *capacity* to diſtingiſh and judge of all impreſſions by that principle; then, there is in fallen man a *capacity* to diſcern and judge of *divine revelations* alſo; becauſe all *revelations* and *impreſſions* ſtand upon a foot, with reſpect of their *divinity*, and becauſe the ſame capacity, which enables a man to take in the *idea* of a propoſition by a *divine impreſſion*, will

will enable him to take in the *idea* of the ſame propoſition by a *divine revelation.*

If it ſhould be ſaid, that the *truth* of the propoſition, and the *divinity* of the impreſſion, are evinced by the *pleaſure* and *ſatisfaction* that ariſe from ſuch impreſſions, and from the truths convey'd by them; I *anſwer*, that this cannot afford any *rational ſatisfactions* and that it makes way for any *deluſion*; becauſe, when a man is perſuaded that he is under a *divine* impreſſion, and that the propoſition, which is preſent to his mind, is a *divine* truth; this perſuaſion will be a *foundation* for pleaſure and ſatisfaction to him, whether it be *well* or *ill grounded*; that is, whether he be *deluded*, with regard to the *divinity* of that impreſſion, and the *truth* of that propoſition, *or not*. Again, if the truth of the propoſition, and the divinity of the impreſſion, are to be inferred from the *force* and *ſtrength* of the impreſſion on the mind; then, man is in a very *unguarded* ſtate, and lies open to all *deluſion* and *impoſition*; becauſe not only when we are *aſleep*, but alſo in our *waking hours*, many ideas ſtrike *forcibly* on the imagination; and, if they are cheriſhed and indulged, will make a *ſtrong impreſſion* on the mind, will raiſe our *deſires*, our *hopes*, or *fears*, or whatever *paſſion* they are ſuited to affect. And this will be the caſe, whether the object be *real*, or *fictitious*. So that if the *ſtrength* of impreſſions is made the *mark* of their divinity, then, a door is opened to the moſt wild and extravagant *enthuſiaſm*. Again, if the divinity of an impreſſion, and the truth of a propoſition thus preſented to the mind, are to be inferred from the *conformity* of that propoſition to the *ſcriptures*; then, ſuppoſing that the *truth* of the propoſition will *follow* from hence, yet the *divinity* of the impreſſion *is not*, in the leaſt, *proved* by it; becauſe, whilſt we conſider the *Bi-*

ble as the *word* of *God*, it is very natural for *thoſe propoſitions* which we diſcover, or think we diſcover in it, to occur *frequently* and *ſtrongly* to our minds, without a divine impreſſion to produce them.

To apply this to the point in debate, betwixt me and the *Quakers*: I will ſuppoſe a man to have this propoſition ſtrongly impreſſed upon his mind, *viz.* That *man cannot do what is morally good, without a ſupernatural influence*, and that the *impreſſion* and the *propoſition* afford him a great deal of *pleaſure* and *delight*. Then, the queſtion will be, what *rational ſatisfaction* he can have, that the impreſſion is *divine*, or that the propoſition attending it is the *truth*, if the *ſtrength* of the impreſſion, or the *pleaſure* which attends it, be made the mark? Then, here is no rational ſatisfaction, becauſe *error* and *deluſion* may ſtrike the mind as *ſtrongly*, and may afford as much *pleaſure*, as *truth itſelf*. If the propoſition's being conſiſtent with or contained in *ſcripture* is made the mark; then, with reſpect to the *divinity* of the impreſſion, here is no rational ſatisfaction, becauſe here is nothing, from whence ſuch a concluſion may *juſtly* and *certainly* be inferred. And, as to the *truth* of the propoſition, the appeal is removed from the *impreſſion*, and made wholly to the *Bible*. And, if the *evidence*, for the truth of the above propoſition be ſuppoſed to ariſe only from the *ſcripture*, then, man is ſuppoſed to be qualify'd to *judge* of the ſenſe of ſcripture, *independant* of any divine impreſſions; and the ſcriptures are ſuppoſed to have all thoſe *qualifications*, which are abſolutely neceſſary to render them *capable* of being the rule of truth; one of which qualifications is, that they muſt be conſiſtent with *nature* and the *truth* of things: for otherwiſe nothing can *rationally* and *certainly* be concluded from them, as I have

have ſhewn above. And, therefore, if the foregoing propoſition, *viz.* That *man cannot do what is morally good, without a ſupernatural influence*, be repugnant to the nature or truth of things, as I ſhall hereafter ſhew that it is repugnant to both; and if the *Bible* be the rule of truth, as it is here ſuppoſed to be; then, it will unavoidably follow, not only that the *Quakers miſrepreſent* the ſcriptures, by repreſenting them as containing the above propoſition, but alſo that they are not under a *divine impulſe*, when that propoſition, is impreſſed upon their minds as a *ſcripture truth*. Thus, I have gone thro' what I propoſed, in the *firſt* place, and have ſhewn, what *qualifications* are abſolutely neceſſary to take place in the *Bible*, in order to render it *capable* of being the *rule* of *truth*. I now proceed,

Secondly, To apply what I have before laid down to the point in hand, by ſhewing how any propoſition, which may be ſuppoſed to be contained in ſcripture, is *affected* by it; from which it will appear, that whilſt we conſider the *Bible* as the *rule* of *truth*, and the *word* of *God*, the following propoſition, *viz.* That *man cannot do what is morally good, without a ſupernatural influence*, aught not to be admitted as the ſenſe of ſcripture, or as contained therein; and, conſequently, that the urging texts of ſcripture, to *prove* the above propoſition, is *trifling* in itſelf, and is offering a manifeſt *injury* to the *Bible*. And, here, I obſerve, that tho' the forementioned qualifications do not afford us a rule of judging, what is the *true* ſence of ſcripture in any one inſtance; yet they do afford a certain rule of judging, what *is not* the ſence of ſcripture in a variety of caſes, and ſo are a proper *guard* and *ſecurity* againſt manifold errors. And, therefore, with reſpect to any doctrine or propoſition, which may be ſuppoſed to be contained in ſcripture, the

queſtion ariſing from hence will be, whether that doctrine or propoſition appears to be *conſiſtent* with, or to be *repugnant* to the *nature* or *truth* of things? If it does not appear to be repugnant to the nature or truth of things, then, it will follow, that the doctrine or propoſition *may* be contained in ſcripture; I ſay, may be contained, becauſe that is all which will follow from hence. For, whether *it is* contained in ſcripture, *or not*, that muſt be proved from *ſuch evidence*, as is neceſſary to determine that point. But if any doctrine or propoſition, which may be ſuppoſed to be contained in ſcripture, does, upon examination, evidently appear to be *repugnant* to the *nature* or *truth* of things; then, it will unavoidably follow, not only that that doctrine or propoſition is *falſe*, but alſo that *it is not* contained in ſcripture. For as the ſcripture is the *rule* of *truth*, and the *word* of *God*; ſo it cannot poſſibly contain in it any *ſuch* doctrine or propoſition, as aforeſaid; ſeeing we are aſſured from the nature of the thing, that God will not, thus attempt to *impoſe* upon and *miſlead* his creatures.

Thus, ſuppoſing it ſhould be urged, that the following propoſition is contained in ſcripture, *viz.* That *God has predetermined, that a multitude of men ſhall be exſtremely and eternally miſerable in another world*; and, *that this determination is the reſult of mere ſovereign pleaſure, conſidered abſtractedly from thoſe men's voluntarily chuſing to make themſelves the proper object of his diſpleaſure*; then, the queſtion will be, whether this propoſition be *conſiſtent* with, or *repugnant* to the *nature* or *truth* of things? In anſwer to which, it is to be obſerved, that as ſuch a conduct is extremely *unjuſt* and *cruel*, and contrary to *wiſdom* and *true goodneſs*; and as God cannot but ſee the *unfitneſs* and *vileneſs* of ſuch a behaviour; and as he cannot poſſibly

poſſibly be under any *temptation* to *evil*; ſo from hence ariſes a *moral certainty*, that he will not, out of mere humour, make and ordain his creatures to be extremely and eternally miſerable, as aforeſaid; and from hence it will follow, not only that the above propoſition is *falſe*, but alſo that it *cannot* be contained in ſcripture; becauſe we are aſſured that God will not publiſh ſo notorious a *falſhood* to this world. And, therefore, if any man ſhould attempt to prove the above propoſition from the *Bible*, and, in order thereto, ſhould collect a great number of texts, and inſiſt that thoſe texts, when *juſtly explained* and *rightly underſtood*, do contain in them that propoſition; this would be perfectly *vain* and *trifling*; becauſe as the *Bible* cannot poſſibly make a *falſe propoſition true*; ſo it muſt not be admitted that the *Bible* contains in it *ſuch* a propoſition, whilſt it is conſidered as the *rule* of *truth*, and the *word* of *God*. And to inſiſt, that it is contained therein, is to offer a manifeſt *injury* to the *Bible*. Again,

Suppoſing it ſhould be urged, that the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation* in contained in ſcripture; that is, that a particular compoſition of particles of matter, which, being applied to the ſenſes, raiſes in us the *idea* of *bread*, does, inſtantly, upon the pronouncing a particular form of words, called *conſecration*, by a chriſtian prieſt, being alike applyed to the ſenſes, raiſe in us the *idea* of *fleſh*; then, the queſtion ariſing from hence will be, whether this doctrine be *conſiſtent* with the *nature* and with the *truth* of things? That it is conſiſtent with the nature of things? I think, muſt be granted; becauſe, I preſume, it will be allowed, that God *can*, if he pleaſes, interpoſe, and change bread into fleſh. This being allowed, the queſtion will be, whether the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation be *conſiſtent* with the *truth* of thing? that is,

whether it be *true*, or *falſe*, in fact, that God does, thus, interpoſe, and change bread into fleſh, upon, the prieſt's pronouncing the words of conſecration? And foraſmuch as it evidently appears from *experience*, that no ſuch change is wrought, as is here ſuppoſed, but, on the contrary, the particular compoſition of particles of matter, upon which the change is ſaid to be made, appears to be bread, *after* conſecration, as much as *before it*; ſo from hence it will unavoidably follow, not only that the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation is *falſe*, but alſo that no ſuch doctrine is contained in *ſcripture*; becauſe we are aſſured, that God will not be guilty of ſo much *falſhood* and *impoſition*.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that the afore ſaid *change* is wrought, and that what was *bread*, before conſecration, is *truly fleſh*, after it, tho' it appears otherwiſe to our *ſenſes*; I *anſwer*, *what* the particular compoſition of particles of matter referred to *is*, when conſidered abſtractedly from the *impreſſion* it makes upon our *ſenſes*, and the *idea* it raiſes in our *minds* thereby, we know nothing of, nor have any idea concerning it; and, therefore, cannot have any term to expreſs it by. And as its ſtriking our ſenſes in a *particular manner*, and its raiſing in our minds a *particular idea*, is what alone brings it under the denomination of *bread*; ſo its ſtriking our ſenſes in the *ſame manner*, and its raiſing in our minds the *ſame idea*, *after* conſecration, as *before*, will ſhew or prove it to be ſtrictly, and properly, and truly *bread*, in *both caſe*; and, conſequently, that there is no ſuch change as is pretended, becauſe *experience* and *fact* ſhew the contrary. Again,

Suppoſing it ſhall be urged, that the following propoſition is contained in the ſcripture, *viz.* That *man cannot do what is morally good, without*

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a ſupernatural influence; then, the queſtion will be, whether this propoſition be *conſiſtent* with, or *repugnant* to the *nature* or *truth* of things? In anſwer to which, I obſerve, that, in my *Examination* of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles, and in my former *Reply* to Mr. *Beaven*, I have ſhewn that man *as man*, or in his natural capacity, is a *moral agent*, and, as ſuch, has in him an inherent power, and is at liberty not only to do what is *morally good*, but alſo all that good which comes within the reach of his agency; and, conſequently, all that good which is his *duty* to perform, and which is *neceſſary* to render him acceptable to his Maker. This being the *truth* of the caſe, it follows that the above propoſition is plainly *repugnant* to the *nature* and *truth* of things. It is repugnant to the nature of things, it being an *abſurdity*, and a *contradiction* in terms, to ſay that a moral agent, which is the caſe of man, cannot do what is morally good, without a ſupernatural influence; becauſe moral agency conſiſts in a *power* and *liberty* of doing all that moral good and evil, conſidered as ſuch, which comes within the reach of that agency. It is likewiſe *repugnant* to the *truth* of things, becauſe *experience* and *fact* ſhew the contrary; ſeeing all that moral good and evil which man performs, in all common caſes at leaſt, is performed by that ability which ariſes from his *natural compoſition*; and from hence it will follow, not only that the above propoſition is *falſe*, but alſo that *it is not*, nor *cannot* be, contained in ſcripture; becauſe the ſcripture, as it is the rule of truth, and the word of God, cannot poſſibly contain in it a falſhood. And, therefore, if the *Quakers* ſhould make a large *collection* of texts of ſcripture, and inſiſt that thoſe texts, when *juſtly explained* and *rightly underſtood*, do contain in them the above

propoſition; this would be exceedingly *vain* and *trifling*. For as the point in controverſy is not, whether that propoſition be contained in ſcripture, but only, whether it be *true*, or *falſe*; ſo, if what they inſiſt on were granted, it would not ſerve their purpoſe; becauſe a *thouſand* texts of ſcripture cannot poſſibly make a *falſe propoſition true*; which is the preſent caſe. And all that would follow from hence would be, that the *Bible is not* the rule of truth, nor the word of God, becauſe, in ſuch a caſe, it would be *deſtitute* of *one* of thoſe qualifications, which are abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary, to render it capable of being ſo; than which, I think, nothing can be more *injurious* to it. But this is not to be admitted; for as the *Quakers*, by making their *appeal* to the *Bible*, in the preſent controverſy, do ſuppoſe and allow it to be the rule of truth, and the word of God; ſo, I think, this is virtually allowing that the *Bible* has *all* thoſe qualifications which are abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary, to render it capable of being ſuch a rule. The unavoidable conſequence of which is, that the above propoſition *is not*, or *cannot* poſſibly be contained therein. I ſhall purſue this argument no farther; becauſe, I think, the caſe is as plain, as that the whole is equal to all its parts, or as any other ſelf-evident propoſition; and becauſe if what I have here offered is not ſufficient for the *Quakers* conviction, then, I think, nothing can be offered which will be ſufficient for that purpoſe; for if men will not be determined by thoſe *common principles* which are the *grounds* of certainty, in all caſes where natural or moral certainty is *attainable*, then, they are not to be *argued* with, becauſe they *diſcard* thoſe principles, which

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are the *foundation* of argument, in all caſes. I come now,

Thirdly and laſtly, To make ſome ſhort reflections upon the whole. And, *firſt*, I obſerve what great influence *education*, *vulgar opinion*, and the like, have upon the minds of men; and what *bars* they are to their *conviction*, inſomuch that, where the judgment is biaſſed by theſe, there the moſt clear and convincing evidence proves unſucceſsful. Thus, the *Papiſts* go on, one generation after another, to believe the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation*, tho', in every inſtance in which it is pretended that bread is changed into fleſh, they *ſee*, and *feel*, and *taſte* that it is ſtill bread; and ſo they believe, in oppoſition to the moſt clear and certain evidence from *experience* to the contrary. Thus likewiſe the *Calviniſt* perſiſts in the belief of the doctrine of *abſolute election* and *reprobation*, in oppoſition to the moſt convincing evidence of *reaſon*; and thus the *Quakers* go on in believing that *the natural man cannot do good, regarding ſpiritual things, without a ſupernatural influence*, in oppoſition to ſuch evidence as is equal to mathematical demonſtration, ariſing from *reaſon* and *experience*. Alſo if it be aſked, what ſhould be done for ſuch men, whoſe judgments are *biaſſed* and *miſled*, as aforeſaid? The anſwer is, that ſuch arguments and reaſonings, as are proper for their conviction, ought to be *propoſed* to them, that if haply they may, ſome time or other, examine things with *freedom* and *impartiality*, and be wrought upon thereby. But if they ſhould continue under the *power* of their prejudices, then, it remains, that he, that is a *Papiſt*, will be a *Papiſt ſtill*; he, that is a *Calviniſt*, will be a *Calviniſt ſtill*; and he, that is a *Quaker*, will be a *Quaker ſtill*. Again,

Secondly,

Secondly, I obſerve that as the *Bible* is made a *common parent* to manifold *errors*, as in the inſtances above; ſo mens underſtandings are put upon the *rack*, in order to *reconcile* the *Bible* to itſelf, and to make it ſpeak in *one place* what they preſume is ſpoken in *another*. Whereas if men would but conſider, that as the *Bible* is allowed to be the rule of truth, and the word of God, ſo it muſt of neceſſity have *all* thoſe *qualifications* which are abſolutely and eſſentially neceſſary, to render it capable of being ſuch a rule, the conſequence of which would be the *barring* of a variety of *errors*; then, the doctrines of *tranſubſtantiation*, of *abſolute election* and *reprobation*, and of *man's natural inability to do what is morally good, without a ſupernatural influence*, would *ceaſe* to be in the chriſtian world; becauſe it would be allowed, that no ſuch doctrines can poſſibly take place in the *chriſtian revelation*. Again,

Thirdly and laſtly, I obſerve, that as the *Bible* is very often uſed to *patronize* mens *errors*, ſo ſometimes the *Spirit* of *God* is made *ſubſervient* to the ſame purpoſe. When men are agitated by *warm* and heated imaginations, then, they are too apt to think of themſelves, and to perſuade others to think of them, that they are under a *divine impulſe*, and that what they preach is the *effect* and *produce* of the Spirit of God in them. And, thus, men of different parties have father'd *different* and *contrary* principles upon the ſame Spirit. And as men are *liable* to be thus *deluded*, ſo, I think, this is a *juſt ground* to be exceeding cautious how we admit ſuch a thought, with reſpect to ourſelves, and how we ſubmit to what is put upon us by others, as ſuch. Certainly, this is a caſe in which we ought to have the *juſteſt* and moſt *rational ſatisfaction*, that we are not miſ-

taken;

taken; becauſe it not only affects ourſelves, but our *Creator* alſo. For if we *err* in this particular, as has certainly been the caſe in a multitude of inſtances, then, we make *God* the *parent* of what ought not to be father'd upon him. It is not enough to ſay that the *Apoſtles* of *Chriſt* were under a divine impulſe, in their *preaching* the *goſpel* to the world; for ſuppoſing that to be the caſe, yet, it will not follow that every man is under the like impulſe, in his *preaching* and *miniſtring*, who pretends to be ſo. Beſides, St. *Paul* informs us, that he preached the goſpel, by the *demonſtration* of the *Spirit* and of *power*; that is, the Spirit and power of God, in working of *miracles*, attended his miniſtry, to awaken the *attention*, and to work the *conviction* of his hearers. But this is not the caſe now; and, therefore, nothing can be *argued* from one caſe to the other.

To conclude, give me leave to obſerve, that man is endowed with a faculty of *underſtanding*, which was given him on purpoſe, to *direct* and *guide* him in all his affairs; and tho' he is *liable* to fall into a great many *errors*, and is capable of receiving information from other agents, in order to rectify thoſe errors, and thereby to have his mind furniſhed with ſuch truths, as otherwiſe he would or might be ignorant of; yet, in theſe caſes, it is his *own* underſtanding which is his *proper guide*. And, therefore, if God ſhould, at any time, impreſs upon our minds any *uſeful truths*, this is only *applying to*, and calling the human underſtanding into *exerciſe*. In which caſe, man is not dealt with as a *machine*, but as a *moral agent*: God does not *over-rule* or *ſuperſede* the uſe of the underſtanding, but only *applies* and *appeals* to it. And, therefore, *divine impreſſions* are not to be conſider'd as a *principle* or *agent*, which acts in every

every man, but only as a *divine* application made to the *underſtandings* of men, like as one man by ſpeech, writing, or otherwiſe, *applies* to the underſtanding of another, tho' in a different way; the human underſtanding being naturally qualified to take it in the *ideas* it receives, and to form the *judgment* it makes, antecedent to ſuch application. So that the *light* of *nature* or *reaſon*, and the *light* of *Chriſt*, are not *two* diſtinct and different *principles* of *diſcernment* in men, the one dim, and the other clear, as ſome chuſe to expreſs it, the latter being only an *addreſs* or *application* to the former; the *Spirit* of *Chriſt* only *raiſing* or *making preſent* to mens minds ſome ideas, which otherwiſe they might not have. For tho' our ideas of things are either *recalled* or *raiſed* in our minds by *reflection*, by the wandering of the *imagination*, by our *ſenſes* being ſtruck by objects from without by *divine revelation* or *divine impreſſions*, by *converſing* with others, and the like; yet theſe are not ſo many diſtinct *principles* of *diſcernment* in men, but only ſo many *different ways* in which the underſtanding is called into exerciſe, and by which we come at truth. And tho' God may ſometimes interpoſe, and impreſs uſeful truths upon the minds of men, yet ſeeing we have no *certain* and *infallible rule* of judging, when he does ſo; therefore, I think, we ought not, in *any inſtance*, to determine that the ideas, which are preſent to the mind, are the produce of a *divine impulſe*. For if this be admitted in one *inſtance*, then, it may in another, and ſo on; which opens a door to all *enthuſiaſm*. And whoever pretends that they are in any particular inſtances, whether in their preaching, or otherwiſe, under a *divine impulſe*, if the ſubject impreſſed upon the mind be what *mankind are intereſted in*, then, I think, ſuch men ought, in

juſtice,

juſtice, to ſhew the *grounds* upon which they form ſuch a judgment, and to make it *plain* to the underſtandings of men, that this is the *truth* of the caſe.

If they ſhould ſay, tho' this is a point which is moſt *evident* and *certain*, yet it is what is only to be *felt* or *experienced* in themſelves, and not to be explained to others. I *anſwer*; if a man is *certain* that he is under a *divine impreſſion*, then, ſurely, it muſt be in his power to ſhew what is the *ground* of that certainty; whether it be the *force* and *ſtrength* of the impreſſion, or the *pleaſure* and *ſatisfaction* ariſing from it, or *whatever* it be; if he is convinced upon *rational evidence*; then, I preſume, our language is not ſo barren, but he may find words to convey his ideas by. And when men talk of experiencing grounds of certainty in themſelves, which they cannot explain; this is drawing the curtain, and taking ſanctuary in *darkneſs*. By this they effectually prevent all others from examining the point, and diſcovering the *deluſion*, if that ſhould be the caſe; and likewiſe by this they bar up the way of *argument* and *conviction* from themſelves. And whatever certainty men may pretend to, in ſuch a caſe; yet, I think, there is *juſt ground* for ſuſpicion, that it is bare *preſumption*; and that it is but very *doubtful*, whether their conviction be any other than the produce of enthuſiaſm. I ſhall add no more at preſent, but that

I am, SIR,

Your obliged humble

Servant, &c.

TRACT

TRACT XXVII.

Reflections on Natural Liberty.

WHEREIN

The Caſe of *Liberty*, and *Neceſſity*, when conſidered, as a proper Foundation for *Virtue* and *Religion*, for *Rewards* and *Puniſhments*, is examined. Occaſioned by Dr. *Morgan*'s Tract, entitled, *A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion.* In a fifth Letter to a Friend.

SIR,

I Should not have given you any farther trouble, on the ſubject of my former letters, were it not that, ſince my laſt, a ſcheme of *fatality* has been advanced, in favour of Mr. *Barclay*'s *Principles*; which ſcheme is conſidered, as the foundation of *virtue* and *religion*, of *rewards* and *puniſhments*. This gives me an occaſion of ſending you a *fifth* letter, in order to examine the forementioned ſcheme, as to the particulars here referred to. And, accordingly, I obſerve, that, in my *Examination of* Mr. *Barclay*'s *Principles*, I ſhewed what, I apprehend, conſtitutes an *agent*, viz. "*intelligence* "and *activity*. By intelligence I mean a capa- "city of thinking or taking in ideas, the ſubject "of ſuch ideas being *motives* or *excitements* to "action,

" action, or to be at reſt, with regard to all ſuch " beings in whom the power of acting reſides. " And by activity I mean a capacity or power of " *beginning* or *performing* motion or action, or of " being at reſt, in conſequence of thoſe ideas that " take place in the underſtanding, and which are " the ground or reaſon of ſuch motion or action, or " of the ſuſpending the exerciſe of that power. " ———And, in order to conſtitute a *moral agent*, " it is not only neceſſary that the being ſhould " be intelligent, in the lower and leſs proper " ſenſe of the word intelligent, as before de- " ſcribed; but it is alſo neceſſary that it ſhould " be ſo, in the higher and more proper ſenſe of that " term. That is, that it ſhould be capable of ſee- " ing things in a *moral view*, and thereby of *judging* " of the moral fitneſs or unfitneſs of actions; and " likewiſe that it ſhould have power to *act*, or " to *refrain* from acting, as it pleaſes."

Here my reader will ſee, that as I have diſtinguiſhed betwixt *moral agency* and *mere agency*, or agency conſidered ſimply as ſuch; ſo I have made, not, as it is ſaid * of me, intelligence and unintelligence, but a *different* capacity of diſcernment in each ſubject, the *ground* of that diſtinction. With me, *intelligence* is neceſſary to mere agency, and to moral agency ſuch intelligence is neceſſary as renders the agent capable of ſeeing things in a *moral view*, and thereby of diſcerning and judging of the moral fitneſs or unfitneſs of actions. And tho' mere agency and moral agency may fitly be diſtinguiſhed into *brutality* and *moral agency*, becauſe, I think, one is the caſe of brutes, and the other of men; yet they may not be fitly diſtinguiſhed into *natural liberty* and *moral agency*,

* In Dr. *Morgan*'s Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion.

becauſe,

becauſe, I think, moral agency is as *natural*, and as *free*, as mere agency itſelf. And,

As I have here conſidered intelligence, as neceſſary to agency; ſo I have conſidered *activity*, as neceſſary alſo. By activity I mean ſuch a power of *ſelf-motion*, as enables the ſubject, in which it reſides, to *chuſe* to move, or to be at reſt, in contradiſtinction to ſuch motion, or reſt, as is the reſult of *external force*, or of *neceſſity*. By external force, I mean ſuch force as is the reſult of ſome *foreign agency* or moving power, independent of any agency or moving power in the ſubject moved, or at reſt. And by neceſſity I mean the *natural* and *neceſſary* reſult of any conſtitution of things, independent of the free * election or choice of the ſubject moved, or at reſt. As thus, ſuppoſing *gravitation* were neceſſarily an inherent property of matter, ſo that, when a ſtone is moved up into the air by external force, when that force ceaſes, the ſtone will, from a principle *neceſſarily* inherent in itſelf, and independent of any foreign agency or moving power, move down to the earth again. I ſay, ſuppoſing this to be the caſe, *ſuch motion*, in my opinion, would not be

* *Note*, By *free election* or *choice* I mean, that as there is in man a *principle* of *motion*, which, upon ſome occaſions, is exerted; ſo that *exertion*, or the *ſuſpending* the exerciſe of that moving power, is not the *natural* and *neceſſary* reſult of the human conſtitution; but it reſults from the *will* of man, who is at *liberty* to act, or not to act, under the ſame circumſtances. And when a man wills to act, or not to act, and is at *liberty* to *will either*; then, he is ſaid to *elect* or *chuſe* to act, or not to act, in oppoſition to each of their contraries. And as ſomething or other will be the *ground* or *reaſon* of choice; ſo when a man chuſes, upon any reaſon which is preſent to his mind, he being at *liberty* to chuſe as he does, or to chuſe otherways, conſonant to any other reaſon which invites him to the contrary; then, his election or choice is ſaid to be *free*; and this is what I mean by a free election or choice, throughout theſe reflections.

action,

action, ſuch a *principle* of motion would not be *agency*, neither would the *ſubject*, in which ſuch a principle reſided, be an *agent*. And if we conſider *intelligence*, as a neceſſary part of any conſtitution of things, and neceſſary not only to the *production*, but to the *direction* and *regulation* of motion, the caſe is ſtill the ſame; for as motion, or reſt, in ſuch a caſe, is the *natural* and *neceſſary* reſult of ſuch a conſtitution, independent of the will or free choice of the ſubject moved, or at reſt; ſo *ſuch motion* would not be *action*, ſuch a *principle* of motion would not be *agency*, and the *ſubject*, in which ſuch a principle reſided, would not be an *agent*. As thus, Suppoſing *man*, with every other creature capable of pleaſure and pain, were, from his conſtitution, naturally, neceſſarily, and unavoidably led to purſue what appeared to him his greateſt ſelf-good, and, conſequently, to the performing ſuch motions as conſtitute that purſuit; and ſuppoſing ſuch motions were in their directions, and regulations, neceſſarily conformable to the impreſſions made upon the underſtanding, with reſpect to the greateſt ſelf-good, and the way to attain it? Yet as all ſuch motions, together with their directions, and regulations, are the *natural* and *neceſſary* reſult of the human conſtitution, independent of any free choice or election in man; ſo *ſuch motion* would not be *action*, the *principle* from which it flowed would not be *agency*, and *man*, in ſuch a caſe, would not be an *agent*; at leaſt, thoſe terms would not be rightly applied, in my eſtimation. However, whether they would, or not, I ſhall not here enquire. For as it is a diſpute about the propriety of words; ſo I will leave that diſpute to thoſe who are better judges, what ideas common uſage has fixed to them. And, therefore, admitting the uſe of thoſe terms, *four* things ſeem proper to

be enquired into; *viz. firſt*, whether any ſubject under ſuch a conſtitution of things, as is now under conſideration; that is, any being whoſe motion, or reſt, is not the produce of free choice or election, but reſults naturally, neceſſarily, and unavoidably from the conſtitution of that being, or from the nature and conſtitution of things in general, be in a ſtate of *liberty*. *Secondly*, whether ſuch a conſtitution is a proper foundation for *virtue* and *religion*, for *rewards* and *puniſhments*. *Thirdly*, whether it *comports* with Mr. *Barclay*'s *Principles*, and is a *proper defence* of them. *Fourthly and laſtly*, whether it is the *truth* of the caſe.

Firſt, I am to enquire, whether any ſubject, under ſuch a conſtitution of things, is in a ſtate of *liberty*. And here, I think, the idea, which the word *liberty* ſerves to convey, is a power of *ſelf-motion*, and *freedom* to exert or ſuſpend the exerciſe of that power, as that it is a matter of free choice or election to the ſubject, in which it reſides, whether it ſhall be exerted, or not. So that liberty, in the preſent caſe, ſuppoſes *intelligence*, to direct the principle of ſelf-motion in the ſubject, in which it reſides. And, therefore, the queſtion is not, whether a *ſtone* is free? becauſe a ſtone being deſtitute of intelligence, ſuppoſing it to have gravitation, as a neceſſary principle of motion inherent in itſelf, which would be exerted under ſome circumſtances, there is no place for that queſtion. But, intelligence being a part of the human conſtitution, it becomes a queſtion, whether man is free, or not. Again, liberty, in the preſent caſe, does not ſtand oppoſed to *want* of power, or to a *reſtraint* of power by external force; and, therefore, the queſtion is not, whether an intelligent creature is at liberty to *fly*, which has no wings? or whether a priſoner is at liberty to *walk farther* than his chain will admit?

but

but it ſtans oppoſed to ſuch *reſtraint*, as ariſes from *neceſſity*. That is, ſuch reſtraint as reſults *neceſſarily* from the conſtitution of the ſubject, thus reſtrained, whether ſuch reſtraint reſults *ultimately* from the nature and conſtitution of things in general, or from the will or free choice of a ſupreme governour. This, I think, is a fair repreſentation of what is commonly underſtood by the term *liberty*, in the preſent caſe. So that any intelligent being whoſe motion, or reſt, or who is the cauſe of motion to any other being; if ſuch motion, or reſt, or the cauſe of ſuch motion is not the produce of *free choice* or *election*, but is the natural and neceſſary reſult of the conſtitution of that being, or of the nature and conſtitution of things, in general, ſuch a being, or a being under ſuch a conſtitution of things, is not in a ſtate of *liberty*; but is in a ſtate which, I think, is commonly expreſſed by the term *fatality*. And, therefore, if *man* is, from his conſtitution, naturally, neceſſarily, and unavoidably led to purſue what appears to him his greateſt ſelf-good, and, conſequently, to the performing ſuch motions as conſtitute that purſuit, independent of any free choice or election in himſelf, then, he is not in a ſtate of *liberty*, he is not a *free creature*.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that tho' man is naturally, neceſſarily, and unavoidably led to purſue what appears to him his greateſt ſelf-good, yet, notwithſtanding, he is a free being; becauſe he is at *liberty* to *reſtrain* himſelf from that purſuit, and to *examine* whether what appears to him to be his greateſt ſelf-good be, in reality ſo or not.

I *anſwer*, if the appearance of the greateſt ſelf-good has ſuch a *neceſſary* effect upon the active faculty, as that a man muſt unavoidably purſue what appears him to be ſo, independent of any free choice or election in himſelf; then, he is

not at liberty to examine that appearance; becauſe, by ſuch neceſſity, the *door* or *way* to examination is *barred* up. And, on the other ſide, if he is at *liberty* to *examine* whether what appears to him to be his greateſt ſelf-good be, in reality, ſo, or not; then, that appearance has no ſuch *neceſſary* effect upon the active faculty, as is here ſuppoſed; theſe being propoſitions which *deſtroy* one another. But if *examination* could come into this ſcheme, it would not help the caſe; becauſe examination would be as *neceſſary*, and as *unavoidable*, as the actions would be, which would follow upon it. For as there muſt be the *appearance* of a probability of error, or the intervention of *ſome motive*, to be a *foundation* for ſuch examination; ſo where that probability appears, or ſuch motive intervenes, man, under ſuch a conſtitution of things, muſt *neceſſarily* and *unavoidably* examine whether what appears to be his greateſt ſelf-good be, in reality, ſo, or not. And, conſequently, he is not, in *any reſpect*, a free being. And this leads me,

Secondly, To enquire, whether ſuch a conſtitution of things is a *proper foundation* for virtue and religion, for rewards and puniſhments. *Virtue* is ſometimes conſidered in a *larger*, and ſometimes in a more *reſtrained* ſenſe. In a larger ſenſe, it includes all ſuch actions as are in themſelves *right* and *fit*, and thereby render the agent, in the performance of them, the proper object of the *approbation* of every other intelligent being, who is qualified to *diſcern* the fitneſs of thoſe actions and the unfitneſs of their contraries. And, in a reſtrained ſenſe, it includes only ſuch as are acts of *kindneſs* and *benevolence* unto others; and thereby render the agent, in the performance of them, not only worthy of approbation, but alſo of the kindneſs and benevolence of every other intelligent being,

being, who is qulified to diſcern the valuableneſs of thoſe actions and the baſeneſs of their contraries. Now, the queſtion ariſing from hence is, whether ſuch a conſtitution of things, as I have now under conſideration, is a *proper foundation* for *virtue*, whether it be conſidered in a larger, or in a more reſtrained ſenſe? and, I think, it is moſt evident that it is not. For as, in the preſent caſe, every man muſt neceſſarily ſee things in that view, in which they are repreſented to his underſtanding, which repreſentation is independent of his free election or choice; and as he muſt neceſſarily act conformable to ſuch appearances, it being no more in his power to ſee things otherwiſe, than as they are repreſented to him, nor to act otherwiſe than conſonant thereto; than it is in the power of a clock to *ſtop* or *vary* its motions, at pleaſure; ſo the conſequence is clear that there is nothing *approvable* or *diſapprovable*, in a moral ſenſe, in ſuch a ſpring or principle of action. For whatever *good*, or *evil*, ſuch actions may be ſubſervient to, as they are the produce, not of free choice or election, but of *neceſſity*; ſo there cannot poſſibly be any thing *morally* good, or evil, in *man* the agent, or rather the inſtrument of performance. A man may be *well* or *ill conſtituted*, and the produce of his conſtitution may be good, or evil, in a natural ſenſe, accordingly. But as his conſtitution, and his actions conſequent upon it, are not owing to himſelf; ſo the good, or evil, of either, cannot, with any colour of reaſon, be placed to his account. For example, ſuppoſe one man to be ſo conſtituted, as that it appears to him that the way to his greater ſelf-good is in *promoting* the good of the publick; and another is ſo conſtituted, as that it appears to him that the way to his greater ſelf-good is in the *deſtruction* of the commonwealth; and each of theſe neceſſarily and

unvoidably act, accordingly. Now, ſeeing it is not what things are in themſelves, but what they appear to be, which neceſſarily *moves* and *directs* the principle of motion in each; and ſeeing thoſe different appearances are the different reſult of their *different conſtitution*, and of ſuch concurring circumſtances, as it was not in the power of either, to introduce, to remove, to alter, or change; and ſeeing the actions, which follow, are *neceſſarily* conformable to thoſe appearances; and ſeeing the appearance of the greater ſelf-good is neceſſarily the ſpring or principle of action in both; therefore, neither of them are the proper object of *approbation*, or *diſlike*, in any other ſenſe than as a *watch* or a *clock* may be the proper object of either; and, conſequently, *man*, in ſuch a ſtate, is not capable of being either *virtuous*, or *vicious*. Whereas, on the other ſide, if man is a *free creature*; that is, if he has power, and is at liberty to do either good, or evil, and either of theſe are the produce not of neceſſity, but of a free choice or election; then, he is capable of rendering himſelf approveable or diſapproveable to every other intelligent being; and, conſequently, to be either virtuous, or vicious. Again,

By *religion*, I mean that which is a proper ground of *acceptance* to Almighty God; ſo that all thoſe actions may be ſaid to be religious, which render the agent *pleaſing* and *acceptable* in the eyes of his Maker. And the queſtion here is, whether the aforeſaid conſtitution of things is a *proper foundation* for religion? and, I think, the anſwer is evident, that it is not. For whatever good, or evil, a good or a bad conſtitution, together with thoſe concurring circumſtances which attend it, may be ſubſervient to; yet as ſuch good, or evil, is not owing to *man*, but to the *author* of his conſtitution; therefore, it ought

not,

not, in reaſon, to be placed to man's account, nor cannot, in reaſon, render him *pleaſing* or *diſpleaſing* to his Maker. God may have reaſon to be pleaſed or diſpleaſed with *himſelf*, if I may ſo ſpeak, for making a good or a bad conſtitution, and for cauſing all that good, or evil, which ſuch a conſtitution neceſſarily produced, ſuppoſing him to be *free* and *voluntary* in ſuch productions; but he cannot, in reaſon, be pleaſed or diſpleaſed with *man*, ſeeing it is not in man's power to *be* otherwiſe than he is, or to *do* otherwiſe than he does; and, therefore, this ſcheme of *fatality* cannot be a proper foundation for *religion*. Whereas, on the ſide, if good and evil be the produce, not of neceſſity, but of *free choice* or *election* in man, and he is at *liberty* to do either; then, he is capable of rendering himſelf either *lovely* or *vile*, either *pleaſing* or *diſpleaſing* to his Maker; and, conſequently, of being either *religious*, or *irreligious*. Again,

By *rewards* and *puniſhments*, I mean ſuch *favours* and ſuch *afflictions* as are laid upon a creature, upon account of ſome *good* or *bad action* which that creature has done, which good or bad action is the *ground* or *reaſon* of thoſe favours or afflictions being laid upon him. All favours do not come under the denomination of rewards, nor all afflictions under the denomination of puniſhments; but only ſuch favours and ſuch afflictions as have ſome precedent good or evil action, or which is judged to be ſo, as the ground or reaſon of them. And tho' ſome favours are conſidered as *introductory* to other and greater favours; and ſome afflictions as *preventions* of other and greater evils; yet they are not conſidered, as rewards and puniſhments, except there be ſome precedent *good* or *evil* action, as the ground and reaſon of their diſtribution. Thus, when a man's houſe is pulled down, to ſave the burning of the town; or when

ſome men are ſingled out to hazard or loſe their lives, for the preſervation of the common-wealth; theſe are not conſidered, as puniſhments. For tho' the loſs of an houſe to one, and the loſs of life to another, be *real afflictions*; and tho' thoſe are neceſſary to, and do prevent much greater; yet they are not conſidered, as puniſhments, in either caſe; and the reaſon is evident, becauſe the idea, which the word *puniſhment* ſerves to convey, ſuppoſes ſome *precedent evil* action, as the ground or reaſon of thoſe afflictions which are called by that name, which is not the caſe before us. And therefore, tho' the word *puniſhment*, when uſed in a *looſe* or *improper* ſenſe, is ſometimes applied to any affliction; yet, when it is taken ſtrictly and properly, it is expreſſive only of ſuch afflictions, as have ſome precedent evil actions, as the ground or reaſon of them. The caſe is the ſame, with reſpect to *reward*; for when the term is taken, ſtrictly and properly, it is expreſſive only of ſuch favours, as have ſome precedent good actions, which are the ground or reaſon of their diſtribution. And,

Tho' rewards and puniſhments may be *medicinal*; that is, tho' the rewarding a perſon, for performing a good action, may become an *excitement* to the actor, and to others to perform the like *good actions*, in hope of obtaining the like *reward*; and tho' the puniſhing a perſon, for doing an evil action, may become a means to *reſtrain* the actor, and others from doing the like *evil actions*, to prevent their falling under the *like correction*; yet theſe are rather the *conſequences* of, than the *ground* and *foundation* of rewards and puniſhments. Rewards and puniſhments have their reaſon in what is *paſt*, and not in what is to come. It is the valuableneſs of a *paſt action*, which renders one man *worthy* of reward; and it is the vileneſs of a *paſt action*, which renders another man

worthy

worthy and deſerving of puniſhment. And as *reſentment* and *gratitude* are the ſprings of action, in the preſent caſe; ſo they are both excited by what is *paſt*, and not by any thing which is to come. It is mens *bad actions*, which raiſe in us the paſſion of *reſentment*; and it is mens *good actions* which excite in us the affection of *gratitude*. And as theſe are made parts of the *human conſtitution*, by the great Author of our being; ſo, I think, they are equally founded in *reaſon*, whilſt under the direction and government of it. That is, whilſt directed to their *proper objects*, and kept within the *bounds* of *reaſon*. And ſuppoſing the only reaſon for rewards and puniſhments, in a *civil ſociety*, were to excite men to perform good actions, and to reſtrain them from doing what is evil, without any regard to the *perſonal merit* or *demerit* of the actor; yet that alters not the caſe here, becauſe it is not, what is the ground and foundation of rewards and puniſhments, in point of *policy*, but what is ſuch, in point of *reaſon* and *morality*, which is the ſubject of our preſent enquiry. Tho' I think, puniſhments, in civil ſociety, are not to be conſidered *barely* as medicinal, but alſo as acts of *publick reſentment*, in which the ſuffering perſon is afflicted *for*, or *becauſe* he is injurious and hurtful to ſociety; as well as to prevent the like evils, for time to come. For as it is evident, that *laws* with their *ſanctions*, *viz.* the threatenings and promiſes annexed to them, *look forward* and have their reaſon in what is *to come*, *namely*, to direct the future behaviour and actions of men; ſo it is alike evident, that the *execution* of thoſe ſanctions, in rewarding and puniſhing, *looks backward* and hath its reaſon in what is *paſt*; *namely*, one man is rewarded *for*, or *becauſe* he has *kept*, and another man is puniſhed *for*, or *becauſe* he has *tranſgreſſed* the *law*. And tho' rewards and puniſhments may

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have an *influence* upon mens *future* behaviour; yet that is, as I have obſerved above, rather a *conſequence* of, than the *reaſon* of them; it being mens paſt actions which are the *ground* and *reaſon* of their diſtribution. And, thus, the *ſcriptures* repreſent mens good and bad actions, as the *reaſon* and *rule* of *action* to *God*, in the diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments, at the *general judgment*. God will then render to every man, not according to the good, or evil, which his favours and corrections ſhall be the occaſion of *introducing*, or *preventing*; but according as every man's works *have been*, whether good, or evil. That is, God will then diſpenſe his favours and his corrections, according as mens *paſt behaviour* has rendered them *worthy* and *deſerving* of either. This being, I think, the true ſtate of the caſe, the queſtion is, whether ſuch a conſtitution of things, as is now under conſideration, is a *proper foundation* for rewards and puniſhments? and the anſwer, I think, is, that it is not. For as the actions of men, whether they are ſubſervient to good, or evil, are not the produce of a free choice or election, but ſpring from a *neceſſity* of *nature*, ſo that, taking all circumſtances into the caſe, a man cannot poſſibly do otherwiſe than he does, he cannot, in reaſon, be the *object* of reward, or puniſhment, on their account. Whereas, if action in man, whether good, or evil, is the produce of *will* or *free choice*, ſo that a man, in either caſe, had it in his power, and was at liberty to have choſe and done the *contrary*, he is the proper *object* of reward, or puniſhment, according as he chuſes to behave himſelf. Upon the whole, I think, it appears, that the foremention'd conſtitution of things is not a *proper foundation* for *virtue* and *religion*, for *rewards* and *puniſhments*. I proceed,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To enquire, whether ſuch a conſtitution of things *comports* with Mr. *Barclay*'s *Principles*, and is a *proper defence* of them? And here I ſhall only conſider his ſcheme, with reſpect to the *fall* of *man* by *Adam*'s *ſin*, and of *man*'s *recovery* by *grace*. And, accordingly, I obſerve, that man, by *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion, according to Mr. *Barclay*, loſt his *diſpoſition*, and therewith his *ability* to do good, and he contracted a diſpoſition, or he became thereby ſo *ſubjected* to the ſeed of the ſerpent, as that he is *neceſſarily* and *unavoidably* determined to do evil, and his loſs is, by grace, ſo far repaired, that he can, by the help of a *divine* and *ſupernatural power*, do good, and avoid doing evil; yet ſo, as that this grace does not work *irreſiſtibly* in him, that is, it does not *force* him to do the one, or avoid doing the other; but leaves him at liberty to *co-operate* with, or *reſiſt* the work or operation of grace in him. This, if I underſtand Mr. *Barclay* aright, is his ſcheme of the *fall*, and of the *recovery* of *man*. And the queſtion, here, is not, whether it is the *truth* of the caſe, but only, whether it *ſuits* with ſuch a *conſtitution* of *things*, as is now under conſideration? and the anſwer, I think, is evident, that it does not. For, in that view of the caſe, man, as he is a creature capable of pleaſure and pain, is, at all times, *neceſſarily* and *unavoidably* led to purſue what appears to him his *greater ſelf-good*, this being an unalterable part of his conſtitution; ſo that all the good, or evil, that he does in the world, is in conſequence of this purſuit, and is the natural and neceſſary reſult of it. And, therefore, whatſoever *bad effect* the ſin of *Adam* might have upon man's *underſtanding*, as to his diſcerning what is his greater ſelf-good, or the way to attain it, that could not make any alteration in him, with reſpect to his *diſpoſition*, and thereby his *ability* to do good,

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or evil, in a *moral* ſenſe; ſeeing his diſpoſition and ability, in theſe reſpects, is, and muſt be always the ſame, the appearance of the greater ſelf-good neceſſarily governing his diſpoſitions and actions, at all times, in every condition, and under every circumſtance which he can poſſibly fall into. And, conſequently, man has not paſſed through ſuch a *change*, nor ſuffered ſuch a *loſs* by *Adam*'s ſin, as Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme ſuppoſes.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that tho' man's diſpoſition, and thereby his ability to do good, or evil, is the ſame ſince, as it was before the fall, he being neceſſarily governed in thoſe reſpects, at all times, by one and the ſame principle or ſpring of action, *viz.* the appearance of the greater ſelf-good; yet his *underſtanding* became ſo *blinded* by *Adam*'s miſcarriage, that he cannot, without a divine light, *diſcern* what is his greater ſelf-good, nor the way to attain it; and that the work of grace conſiſts in *enlightening* mens minds, in theſe reſpects; ſo that now, by the help of *illuminating grace*, it is in a man's power to do either good, or evil. That is to ſay, if man *follows* this divine light, he will do good; if he *neglects* it, he will do evil; it being a matter of *choice* to him to do either.

I *anſwer*, if this were the caſe, man in the fall, without divine grace, would be in a *deplorable* and *pitiable*, but he could not poſſibly be in a *ſinful* ſtate; he would have a *darkened underſtanding*, but he could not have a *ſinful nature*, or a *natural inclination* to ſin. For as man is, from his conſtitution, naturally and unavoidably led to purſue what appears to him his greater ſelf-good, and, conſequently, to perform ſuch motions as conſtitute that purſuit; and as the blindneſs of his underſtanding is not owing to himſelf; ſo his deſires and his conſequent actions cannot, in reaſon, be conſidered as *criminal*. And as to the

darkneſs

darkneſs upon man's underſtanding, with reſpect to his diſcernment of the greater ſelf-good, and the way to attain it; that muſt have been the caſe of *Adam before the fall*, or elſe he could not have *miſcarried*. The proſpect of *pleaſure* in eating the forbidden fruit, or whatever was the *motive* to action, in that caſe, muſt *appear* to *Adam* to be his *greater ſelf-good*, or the *way* to attain it, or elſe he could not have *eat* it; and if it, thus, appeared, then, he could not poſſibly have done otherwiſe. So that his *fall* was neceſſarily the reſult of the *darkneſs* and *blindneſs* of his underſtanding, and that was the neceſſary reſult of his *conſtitution*, even in his moſt *primitive* ſtate; which, ſurely, does not *ſuit* with Mr. *Barclay*'s *Principles*. And if we conſider the work of grace, as conſiſting in enlightening mens minds, with reſpect to their greater ſelf-good, and the way to attain it, this will not *comport* with Mr. *Barclay*'s *ſcheme*; becauſe, when men are thus enlightened, *ſuitable* action muſt *neceſſarily* and *unavoidably* follow; ſeeing action, upon the preſent ſuppoſition, is the neceſſary reſult of the *impreſſions* made upon the *underſtanding*. And, therefore, ſuppoſing all men, without divine grace, are *invincibly ignorant*, in theſe reſpects, and ſuppoſing illuminating grace is afforded unto *all*; then, it will unavoidably follow that no man can poſſibly *miſcarry*. For, in this view of the caſe, grace works *irreſiſtibly*, and men cannot receive it in *vain*; where *light* interpoſes, *ſuitable* action muſt, and will neceſſarily and unavoidably follow, which overthrows Mr. *Barclay*'s *ſcheme*. Thus, I think, it appears, that the conſtitution of things, I have now under conſideration, does, by no means, *comport* with Mr. *Barclay*'s *Principles*, and, therefore, it cannot be a *proper defence* of them. And it is ſtill my opinion, that thoſe principles are *indefenſible*; at leaſt, they

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are ſo, for any thing that the *advocates* of Mr. *Barclay*'s ſcheme have ſhewn to the contrary. As to that *ſhift* which Mr. *Beaven* is, at laſt, driven to, in the *defence* of thoſe principles, *viz.* his diſtinguiſhing betwixt faculties *aſleep*, and faculties *awake*; I obſerve, that tho' mens careleſſneſs and negligence, in not reflecting upon and conſidering the nature and conſequences of their actions, in an affair of the utmoſt concern to themſelves, may, by a *figure* of ſpeech, be called *ſleep*; becauſe they are as *regardleſs* of their higheſt intereſt, as men are, when really aſleep; yet, in this caſe, their faculties are ſo far from being properly *aſleep*, that, on the contrary, they are *awake*, by being in uſe and exerciſe; tho' employed, perhaps, to a bad purpoſe, and they are guilty of the higheſt folly and madneſs, in the *uſe* and *abuſe* of them. For as thoſe faculties are parts of the human conſtitution; ſo man, without a ſupernatural influence, has *power*, and is at *liberty* to neglect them, to uſe them aright, or to abuſe them, as he pleaſes; and is anſwerable to God for his behaviour, accordingly; and this renders his conduct juſtly *approveable*, or *condemnable*, which otherwiſe it could not be either. I now proceed,

Fourthly and laſtly, To enquire, whether the forementioned conſtitution of things is the *truth* of the caſe? That is, whether man, as he is a creature capable of pleaſure and pain, is, from his conſtitution, *naturally* and *neceſſarily* led to purſue what *appears* to him his *greateſt ſelf-good*, and, conſequently, to the performing ſuch motions as conſtitute that purſuit? and, I think, upon enquiry, it will appear, that this is not the caſe? I ſhall not here examine, what are the ſeveral ſprings or excitements to action in man, but only make *one* or *two* obſervations which, I think,

think, frequent experience will ſupport, *viz. firſt*, men, in many inſtances, purſue pleaſure, without entering into the queſtion, whether what they purſue be, in the enjoyment, their greater ſelf-good, or not? And tho' in theſe caſes, *pleaſure* is the *motive* to action, yet it is only conſidered as *preſent* pleaſure, and not as the greater ſelf-good, for if that were taken into the caſe, and to be made the reaſon of action, men would, in many inſtances, *deny* themſelves thoſe pleaſures they purſue; which ſhews, that the greater ſelf-good is not the *ſole principle* of action in man. Again, *ſecondly*, where *two* goods come in *competition*, a preſent and a future, a leſs and a greater, which are known and judged to be ſo, men, in ſome inſtances, chuſe a *greater future* good, and *refuſe* a leſs that is preſent; and, in other inſtances, they chuſe a *leſs preſent* good, and *refuſe* a greater that is future. Thus, a man who is ſatisfied there will be a *future ſtate* of happineſs and miſery after death, one or other of which ſtates every man muſt be a ſharer in, according as he now behaves himſelf; and he is likewiſe ſatisfied, upon the moſt juſt and rational grounds, as he thinks, that all the *pleaſure* and *pain*, he is capable of enjoying or ſuffering at preſent, bears *no proportion* to the pleaſure and pain he muſt enjoy or ſuffer hereafter; and, conſequently, that his greater ſelf-good is not any thing which he can enjoy in this world, when it comes in competition with the enjoyment of another. Thus he *judges*, and thus he *muſt* judge, it being no more in his power to judge otherwiſe, whilſt the *evidence* of a future ſtate appears clear to him, than it is for him to judge that *two* and *two* make *ſix*. And yet, notwithſtanding all this, he does, in many inſtances, hazard his *greater future good*, for the ſake of a *leſs* that is preſent; which ſhews that the appear-

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ance of the greater ſelf-good is not a *neceſſary principle* of action in man. And tho' pleaſure is the natural object of *deſire*, and, therefore, the appearance of pleaſure is an *invitation* to enjoyment; yet it is but an invitation, becauſe every man is at liberty to *give* or *deny* himſelf that pleaſure, as he pleaſes. And tho' *ſelfiſhneſs* may ſometimes be the *ground* or *reaſon* of ſuch ſelf-denial, as when a man denies himſelf a leſs preſent good, for the ſake of a greater laid up for him in futurity; yet this is not always the caſe. Men ſometimes deny themſelves a preſent enjoyment, not from a proſpect of farther and greater pleaſure to themſelves, but purely that they may be *ſubſervient* to the good and benefit of others. And tho' ſuch ſelf-denial will naturally introduce pleaſure to a *man's ſelf*; yet that pleaſure is only the *produce* of, and not the *ground* or *reaſon* of ſuch benevolent actions. This is what I have already conſidered * elſewhere, and, therefore I ſhall not purſue it farther; it being, I think, manifeſt, that the appearance of the greater ſelf-good is not a neceſſary, and thereby the ſole principle of action in man.

I will only add, that *liberty* of actions is, I think, the only foundation of *moral government*, in contradiſtinction to ſuch government as is called *natural*. By *natural* government I mean the *involuntary* and *neceſſary ſubjection* of any being or ſpecies of beings to a *law*, which the God of nature hath ſubjected them to. Thus, the *regular* and *neceſſary* motions of the ſeveral *planets*, in the ſolar ſyſtem, is conſidered, as a part of the government of the *natural world*. And if *intelligence* be conſidered as a *neceſſary* part of any conſtitution of things, and if the intelligent ſubject be *neceſſarily* ſubjected to that *law* by which it is governed, this would be

* See my Diſcourſe on Virtue and Happineſs.

but

but *natural* government, or a part of the government of the *natural* world; becauſe, in ſuch a caſe, ſubjection is not *voluntary*, but is as *natural* and *neceſſary*, as the ſubjection of any *unintelligent* ſubject can be. And by *moral* government I underſtand the giving a *law* or rule of action to intelligent beings, who are qualified to *diſcern* the *fitneſs* of their *ſubjection* to that law, and the *unfitneſs* of their *refuſing* to be governed by it, with *liberty* to act *agreeably* with, or *contrary* thereto. And as their ſubjection or the contrary is voluntary; ſo they render themſelves thereby worthy of the *favour* or *diſpleaſure* of the law giver, which otherwiſe they would not be either. And, therefore, if the appearance of the greater ſelf-good were a *natural* and *neceſſary* principle of action in man, and thereby his ſubjection is not voluntary, but he is neceſſarily ſubjected to the law by which he is governed; then, he is not the ſubject of *moral*, but only of *natural* government. And if a *moral law*, or any other *rule* of action, were delivered to ſuch a ſpecies of beings, it could not anſwer the *purpoſes* of a law to them; becauſe there is another law, to which the whole ſpecies are naturally and neceſſarily ſubjected. And tho' a *given law* may, in ſome inſtances, ſeem to be *complied* with; yet ſubmiſſion, in thoſe inſtances, is *accidental*, as the law happens to *coincide* with that other law, *viz.* the appearance of the greater ſelf-good, to which man is neceſſarily ſubjected. And if *God*, in the government of the world, be *naturally* and *neceſſarily* ſubjected to the nature and conſtitution of things, ſo that his productions are not the effect of *free choice*, but of *natural neceſſity*; then, I think, he is a governour of the world, in no other ſenſe than the *ſpring* of a *watch* is a governour to the reſt of the movements in that machine. For tho' one is *intelligent*, and the o-

ther *unintelligent*; yet as they both are *neceſſary cauſes* of what they produce, *government* muſt be the ſame, in both caſes. The caſe is the ſame with reſpect to any *advantage* or *benefit* we receive. That is, we are as much *obliged* to the *ſun*, as we are to *God*, for the light and heat we receive from it; they both being *involuntary*, with reſpect to *thoſe favours*. For as the *ſun* cannot avoid diffuſing its light and heat; ſo *God* could not avoid giving it being, placing it were it is, and giving it thoſe uſeful qualities. Whereas, on the other ſide, if God and men are *free beings*; that is, if God's productions are the affect, not of *fate* or *neceſſity*, but of *free choice* or *election*; and if men are at *liberty* to act conformable to thoſe laws, which God hath freely, and thereby kindly, recommended, as a rule of action to them, from ſuch motives as render their choice either juſtifiable, *approvable*, or *condemnable*; then, God is, in reality, a *benefactor* to the intelligent world, and mankind are under a *rational* and *moral* government, which otherwiſe neither of them would be.

If it ſhould be ſaid, ſuppoſing God has *power*, and is at *liberty* to do either good, or evil; then, we cannot be *certain*, but he will do the *latter*; yea he may do more evil than good, for any *grounds* we have, from which we may *juſtly* conclude the contrary. I anſwer, the *certainty* of God's not doing evil does not ariſe from his being under a *neceſſity* of doing good, but it ariſes from hence, *viz.* that there is not any thing in nature, which can poſſibly afford him an *excitement* or *temptation* to it. And from hence ariſes a proper ground of certainty, not that God *cannot*, but that *he will not do evil*. God can do evil, with reſpect to any *natural neceſſity* he is under to the contrary; but we may be aſſured *he will not*, becauſe we are ſure nature does not afford a *motive*, which will be

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to him the *ground* or *reaſon* of ſuch a choice. And tho' nature does not afford an excitement or temptation to God to do evil; yet he is not the leſs *free* in doing good; becauſe, when he does ſo, he acts in the *ſame way*, and his actions ſpring from the ſame *principle* or *cauſe of action*, and he thereby acts with equal *freedom*, in thoſe inſtances in which there is no excitement to the contrary, as he would do, if there were ſuch excitements; and, in ſuch a caſe, tho' a *free being can act without a motive*, with reſpect to any *neceſſity* he is under to the contrary; yet, I think, it is evident *he will not*, becauſe, I think, there muſt be ſome *motive*, to be the ground or reaſon of his choice. And, thus, we may be ſure that tho' every *man* has the power of his *own life* in his *own hand*; yet no man will lay violent hands upon himſelf, without ſome *excitement* or *temptation* to it. And tho' *cannot* and *will not*, in this caſe, are the ſame, with reſpect to the *event*; yet they are not the ſame with reſpect to the *ground* and *cauſe of action*. As to thoſe queſtions, *viz.* whether God does *foreknow* the actions of men? and whether *preſcience* and *liberty* are conſiſtent? theſe I am no way concerned with. Tho', that *man is a free being*, and that *God does foreknow what man will do*, are propoſitions, which, I think, *do not* deſtroy one another.

To conclude, I obſerve, that if *moral* government conſiſted in the *neceſſary* ſubjection of its ſubjects to the laws that are given them; and if action in man were the *neceſſary* effect of the *impreſſions* made upon the underſtanding; then the *truths*, the *promiſes* and *threatenings* of the goſpel, would have a *different effect* upon the *lives* of thoſe that believe them, than at preſent they appear to have. Then, the actions of chriſtians would be *exactly conformable* to that *light* which every man

receives from the gospel; which, surely, every day's experience shews to be wrong. Upon the whole, I observe, That as *liberty* to act, in opposition to necessity, is necessary to render the agent justly *approvable*, or *condemnable*, according to those *motives* which are to him the ground or reason of his choice; so *liberty* is necessary to the very being of *religion*, whether *natural*, or *revealed*, for, without liberty, there cannot possibly be either. And as not any thing can, in reason, be a *man's duty*, but what comes within the reach of his *agency*; and as liberty to act, in opposition to necessity, puts it into a man's power to do what ever comes within the reach of that agency: so from hence it will follow that man has power, and is at liberty to do *all* that is his *duty*, or that is *necessary* to render him *acceptable* to his Maker, *without a supernatural influence*; which is the *point* I have been concerned to make good; and which, I think, is destructive of Mr. *Barclay's scheme.*

I am, SIR,

Your obliged humble

Servant, &c.

TRACT

TRACT XXVIII.

SOME FARTHER

Reflections on Natural Liberty;

WHEREIN

Several other Points relating to the Subject are conſidered.

BEFORE I leave this ſubject, I think it proper to take notice of a few points, which are urged in prejudice of *natural liberty*; viz. *firſt*, it is ſuppoſed clear and evident, from the nature of the thing, that a man is under a *neceſſity* to chuſe what he *does chuſe*; or to chuſe what, upon the whole, appears to be *beſt*. The force of the argument, if I underſtand it aright, is as follows; *namely*, that as it is moſt clear and evident, from the nature of the thing, that a man muſt *perceive* things, and *judge* of propoſitions, whilſt they appear in the ſame light, as he *does* perceive and judge of them, it not being in his power to perceive and judge *otherwiſe*; ſo it is alike clear and evident, from the nature of the thing, that a man is under the like *neceſſity* to will or chuſe what he *does chuſe*, it not being in his power to will or chuſe the *contrary*; the *will* being as *neceſſarily* determined to chuſe what, upon the whole, appears to be beſt, as the *perception* and *judgment* are *neceſſarily* determined by thoſe objects which are preſented to them.

Upon which I obſerve, that our perceptions of things are no other than the *images* of thoſe things *raiſed in*, or *impreſſed* upon our minds; and our judgments of propoſitions are no other than the

diſcernment of the *relation*, or the *contrary*, which the parts of thoſe propoſitions ſtand in to each other, and the like. And, therefore, we cannot poſſibly perceive or judge otherwiſe than we do; becauſe that ſuppoſes we can have a perception of things *different* from the images of thoſe things raiſed in, or impreſſed, upon our minds, which images, thus impreſſed, are thoſe very perceptions; and that we can judge of propoſitions *different* from the relation, or the contrary, which we diſcern the parts of thoſe propoſitions to ſtand in to each other, which diſcernment is that very judgment; both which are *abſurdities*, and *impoſſibilities* in nature. But tho' it thus appears evident, from the nature of the thing, that a man cannot poſſibly perceive or judge otherwiſe than he does; yet it does not appear alike evident, that a man is *neceſſarily confined* to chuſe what he does chuſe, or to chuſe what, upon the whole, appears to be beſt. And here, if it be admitted that good is the *ſole object* of the will, tho', I think this may juſtly be * queſtioned; yet that does not confine it to the choice of any *particular* good, which may be pre-

* I think, it does not imply a *contradiction*, if the will be ſuppoſed to chuſe *evil*, as ſuch. All that can be urged, in the preſent caſe, I think, is only this. *viz.* that *nature* does not afford a *motive*, which will be the *ground* or *reaſon* of ſuch a choice. And, if this be the caſe, then, it will follow, not that a man *cannot*, but that he *will not* chuſe evil, as ſuch. A man, that is at *Hackney*, can walk to *London*, ſuppoſing him to have health, and ſtrength, and limbs ſufficient to carry him thither; and yet he *will not*, without ſome *previous reaſon*, as the ground of ſuch choice. To this I may add, that, in all *revengeful* actions, evil, as ſuch, tho' not to the agent, yet to another, ſeems to be the ground or reaſon of them. For when one man revenges an injury upon another, the *motive* to action, in that caſe, is not the removing from himſelf the *pain* and *uneaſineſs* of mind, which ariſes from, and attends his reſentment, tho' that may be the *effect* of it; but it is to give pain and miſery to *another*, who has been, as he thinks, voluntarily and unreaſonably the *cauſe* of his affliction.

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ſented to it. Good admits of a great *variety*. There are pleaſures of *different kinds*, which ſuit and affect the various parts of our *conſtitution*; and theſe offer themſelves as *candidates* for our election. The good of *ourſelves* and the good of *others*, *preſent* good and good at a *diſtance*, offer themſelves to, and court our *choice*, when they cannot be choſen and enjoyed together. So that nature is ſo far from *confining* the will to the choice of any *particular* good, that, on the contrary, it has laid a *foundation*, and made a *proviſſion* for a *liberty* of choice. Every good is *what it is*, or what it *appears to be*, independent of every other good; and, as ſuch, it is the object of our choice tho' *ten thouſand other* or *greater* goods come in competition with it; becauſe the perception of *another* or a *greater* good does not change its nature, or render it leſs the object of our choice after, than before ſuch a perception. Beſides, *choice*, I think, ſuppoſes liberty. For if we are neceſſiated to take a thing, let what will be the ground of that neceſſity, that properly ſpeaking, is not choice: but if we are at liberty to take it, or not, or to take one thing, and not another, when we may, if we pleaſe, take either, this expreſſes the idea to which we annex the term *choice*. And tho' it is *highly reaſonable* that a man ſhould always chuſe the *greater good*, or that good which upon the whole, is beſt; yet nature has not laid him under a neceſſity of doing ſo, but he may, if he pleaſe, chuſe otherwiſe. That is, he may, if he pleaſe, chuſe a *preſent pleaſure*, in oppoſition to what is beſt for himſelf, upon the whole, and ſo make a *fooliſh* choice; or he may chuſe what is *beſt*, *upon the whole*, and deny himſelf a preſent enjoyment, and thereby act the part of a *wiſe-man*. He may likewiſe, if he pleaſe, chuſe what is good for *himſelf*, in oppoſition to the good of the *publick*,

and ſo make a *vicious* choice; or he may refuſe that good, for the ſake of the *common-wealth*, and thereby act a *virtuous* and a *generous* part. And tho' our underſtandings enable us, generally, tho' in ſome inſtances they may err, to diſcern what good is *moſt worthy* of our choice; yet that diſcernment does not *neceſſarily* determine our actions. The underſtanding has a *two-fold* office, in this caſe, if I may ſo ſpeak; *firſt*, to diſcover the *good*, or *evil*, of thoſe objects that are preſented to it, and this is called *perception*; *ſecondly*, to diſcern the *difference* betwixt one object and another, with reſpect to their good, or evil, when they are brought into a compariſon, ana when the circumſtances and conſequences, that attend them, are taken into the caſe, and this is called *judgment*; and, when the underſtanding has thus performed its office, it has not any thing farther to do, with reſpect to action; this being all that, in the nature of the thing, can poſſibly be done by it; action being performed by a *ſelf-determining power*, which is as diſtinct and different from the underſtanding, as the underſtanding is diſtinct and different from thoſe objects which are perceived by it. So that, tho' the will does *depend* upon the *underſtanding* for its *informations*, yet it is not *confined* by it to the choice of any *particular* good, whether greater, or leſs; but it is at liberty to chuſe what kind of good it pleaſes, whether it be in the perſuit of objects that ſtrike and affect our *appetites*, or *affections*, or any other part of our *conſtitution*; and conſequently, nature has left it to our *choice* to be either virtuous, or vicious, to be either wiſe-men or fools. And, therefore, tho' the underſtanding is, by nature, confined to *perceive* and *judge*, as it does, it being impoſſible that *contrary* images, or *different* diſcerments of the ſame thing, ſhould be impreſſed upon the mind, at the ſame time; yet it is quite

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otherwiſe, with reſpect to the will, which can have *different goods* preſented, at the ſame time, as the *objects* of its *election*, and nature has left it *free* and at *liberty* for the choice of *any* of them; neither are thoſe caſes at all parallel, ſo as to lay a foundation for arguing from one to the other. Again,

Secondly, *Experience* is urged, in favour of *neceſſity*; the force of which, I think, is as follows; *namely*, experience is ſuppoſed to ſhew that men do, in *every inſtance*, chuſe, and, conſequently, purſue what, upon the whole, appears to be *beſt*; and from hence ariſes a high degree of probability, that they are under a neceſſity to act thus; for if it be admitted that men *can act otherwiſe*, then, it is highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe that, in *ſome inſtances*, they would do ſo, whereas experience ſhews the contrary. This, I think, is the force of the argument, drawn from *experience*. To which I anſwer, that the evidence, ariſing from experience, determines not againſt, but in *favour* of liberty. As thus, ſuppoſing a *leſs preſent good* comes in competition with a *greater* that is *future*; in this caſe, I think, every man muſt judge that the greater future good is, upon the whole, *beſt*; it being no more in a man's power to judge, that a leſs preſent good is, upon the whole, *better* than a greater that is future, than it is in his power to judge that *two* and *two* make *ſix*. Now, the queſtion ariſing from hence is, whether men do, in *every inſtance*, chuſe a *greater* future good, in oppoſition to a leſs that is preſent, when theſe come in competition; and thereby *always* act conformable to their judgments? or whether they do not, in *ſome inſtances*, chuſe a *leſs* preſent good, in oppoſition to a greater that is future, and thereby act againſt their judgments? and experience is appealed to, as a *juage* in the caſe. And, I think, it is ſo far from being

ing evident from experience, that men do always act *conformable* to their judgments, in the preſent caſe; that, on the contrary, experience ſhews that they do, in many inſtances, act *againſt* them. That is, they do, in many inſtances, chuſe a *leſs* preſent good, in oppoſition to a greater that is future, when theſe come in competition. And I muſt intreat my reader to conſult his own experience, and ſee, whether he he does not, in many inſtances, follow his *appetites*, and the like, in oppoſition to his *reaſon*. If it ſhould be ſaid, that, *at the time* of his choice, he judged it to be *beſt*. I *anſwer*, If he took a view of the caſe, he could not poſſibly judge ſo; and, if he did not take a view of it, then, the motive to action was not the greater good, but only *preſent pleaſure*; and action was the produce, not of judgment, but of *appetite*, or like. And as men do ſometimes purſue a preſent pleaſure, without entering into the queſtion, whether it be the greater good, or not? ſo, in ſome inſtances, they chuſe a preſent pleaſure, tho' convinced, at the time, that it is no the greater, but the *leſs* good. Thus, the *drunkard* will gratify his deſire of liquor, tho' he is reminded of, and convinced, at the time, that it will bring upon him ſuch a diſorder, as is more than an equivalent to the pleaſure that aroſe from that gratification. If it ſhould be ſaid, that men prefer a leſs preſent good to a greater that is future, becauſe the preſent good is *certain*, and the future is *uncertain*. I *anſwer*, Men act *differently*, in this reſpect, when the *grounds* of certainty on the one ſide, and of uncertainty, on the other, are *equal*; and, therefore, that cannot be a *neceſſary* cauſe of ſuch different actions. Beſides, ſome men who are ſatisfied, upon the beſt grounds, as they think, of a *future* ſtate of happineſs, and that all preſent enjoyments fall vaſtly ſhort of it,

do,

do, notwithſtanding ſuch a *conviction*, ſometimes hazard the happineſs of another world, for the ſake of a ſhort-lived pleaſure here. And as men, in ſuch a caſe, do, as it were, give the *lie* to themſelves, by acting *contrary* to their judgments; ſo this is a juſt foundation for that *indignation* and *reſentment*, which they take up *againſt themſelves*, for acting ſo fooliſh and ridiculous a part; which otherwiſe there would not be any foundation in *nature* or *reaſon* for. However, as *experience* is appealed to, in the preſent caſe; ſo there I muſt leave it. That is, I muſt leave my reader to conſult his *own* experience, whether he does, in *every inſtance*, act *conformable* to his judgment, in chuſing what, upon the whole, appears to be beſt? or whether, in *ſome inſtances*, he does not follow his appetites, and the like, and thereby act *againſt* his judgment, in chuſing that, which, when all things are taken into the caſe, he cannot but ſee is the *leſs* good? I ſay, I muſt leave my reader to conſult his own experience; becauſe other mens judgments or experiences may poſſibly be of leſs weight with him, with reſpect to this argument. Again,

Thirdly, It is urged, in prejudice of *liberty*, that it is *impoſſible*. The force of this argument, I think, is as follows, *viz.* man is a *neceſſary agent*, becauſe all his actions have a *beginning*; for whatever has a beginning muſt have a *cauſe*, and every cauſe is a *neceſſary* cauſe. If any thing can have a beginning which has no cauſe, then, *nothing* can produce *ſomething*; and, if nothing can produce ſomething, then, the *world* might have had a beginning, without a cauſe, which is not only an *abſurdity* commonly charged on *Atheiſts*, but is a real *abſurdity* itſelf; becauſe, if a cauſe be not a *neceſſary cauſe*, then, it is *no* cauſe at all; for if cauſes are not neceſſary cauſes of the effects they pro-

duce,

duce, then, thoſe cauſes are not *ſuited* to, or are *indifferent* to theſe effects, which, in reality, is the ſame as to be *no* cauſe at all. Liberty, therefore, or a power to act, or not to act, to do this, or another thing, under the *ſame cauſes*, is an *impoſſibility*, and is *atheiſtical*. To which I anſwer, that *action in man* is the *motion* of his body, cauſed by the *exertion* of the moving principle which reſides in him, and is a part of his conſtitution, as the parts of the body are which are moved by it; and as theſe are parts of the human conſtitution, and, as ſuch, are *a man's ſelf*; ſo ſuch motion is called *ſelf-motion*; and the *cauſe* of this moving principle in *man* is *God*, who is the Author of his conſtitution. Theſe are all the *links* that are in this *chain*, *viz.* action is the motion of the body, cauſed by the exertion of the ſelf-moving principle, which reſides in man; and the cauſe of this ſelf-moving principle is God. So that here is *not* an effect, without a cauſe; here is *not* an impoſſibility; here is *not* an approach to atheiſm, as the preſent argument ſuppoſes.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that tho' there is in man a *ſelf-moving* principle; yet that principle *will not* be exerted, without the perception of *ſome motive*, which motive is the *cauſe* of that exertion; ſo that here is *one* of the links of this chain *dropped*. I *anſwer*, If the moving principle in man is moved, or cauſed to be exerted, by ſomething *external to man*, which all *motives* are, then, it would not be a *ſelf-moving* principle, ſeeing it would be moved by a cauſe *external to itſelf*; and to ſay that a ſelf-moving principle is moved, or cauſed to be exerted, by a cauſe external to itſelf, is *abſurd* and a *contradiction*; becauſe it ſuppoſes the *preſence* and *abſence*, the *exertion* and *non-exertion* of the ſame power, in the ſame ſubject, at the ſame time. And if there is not in man a ſelf-moving principle, but only ſuch a principle as is capable of being

ing *moved* or *acted upon* by ſome external cauſe; then, *agency* is not in man, but in that external cauſe, or in its cauſe, and ſo on, 'till we come to ſome ſubject which has in it a principle of ſelf-motion, that is exerted, *independent* of any external cauſe. Beſides, motives are as much the *cauſe* of our *not exerting* the ſelf-moving power, in ſome inſtances, as they are the *cauſe* of that *exertion*, in other inſtances. That is, we are as much moved or cauſed to *ſuſpend* the exertion of the ſelf-moving power, by the *motive* which is the reaſon of that ſuſpenſion, as we are moved or cauſed te *exert* that power, by the *motive* which is the ground or reaſon of that exertion; thoſe motives *operating* or *cauſing*, if I may ſo ſpeak, the ſame way, in both caſes. Now, to ſay, that the non-exertion of the ſelf-moving power is cauſed by a motive, is the ſame as to ſay, that *that motive* is the cauſe of *nothing*; the non-exertion of the ſelf-moving power being a *negative*, it, properly ſpeaking, is nothing; ſo that a motive, in this caſe, is the cauſe of nothing, or, in other words, it is *a cauſe, without an effect*; which is as *abſurd* as *an effect, without a cauſe*. But the truth is, they are not cauſes, in either caſe; tho', in common language, they are often called ſo. Motives are only the *ground* or *reaſon*, why we ſuſpend or exert the ſelf-moving power, or why we exert it, in one way, or at one time, rather than in another way, or at another time, but are not cauſes of either. Motives are merely *paſſive*, if I may ſo ſpeak, in the production of action. That is, they have no *cauſality*, in the production of it. The fine colour of liquor in a glaſs may be a *reaſon* to me, to *exert* my ſelf-moving power, in order to taſte the pleaſure which I may propoſe to enjoy, in ſo doing; but neither the *liquor*, nor its *colour*, nor my *perception* of either, has any *cauſality* in them to be the cauſe

of

of that exertion. And tho', when the ſelf-moving power is exerted, it becomes a *neceſſary* cauſe of its effects; yet as a man is *free* and *voluntary*, in the exertion of that power; that is, he is not under a neceſſity, from the conſtitution of things, to exert it, or not to exert it, to exert it this way, or that way, tho' there may be more reaſon for the one than the other; ſo, in that reſpect, it is ſaid to be a *free cauſe*, and thoſe *effects* are likewiſe ſaid to be *free*, which are produced by it. And as motives are not the cauſe of action, ſo all, that is neceſſary to the exertion of a ſelf-moving principle, is not a cauſe, but an *occaſion* of ſuch exertion; and this is the caſe of *motives*; they do not cauſe, but only give occaſion for the *exertion* of the ſelf-moving power; they are only *reaſons*, why a man does, or does not exert this power, but are not *cauſes* of either. Seeing, then, that action in man is the motion of his body, cauſed by the exertion of the ſelf-moving principle, which reſides in him; and the cauſe of that ſelf-moving principle is God; and ſeeing that motives are not the cauſe, but only the ground or reaſon of action, and that a reaſon of action is ſufficient to give occaſion, for the exertion of the ſelf-moving power, without any external cauſe; from hence it will follow, that, in the production of action, there is *not* an effect, without a cauſe, and that liberty is *not* impoſſible, nor atheiſtical. Again,

Fourthly, It is urged, in prejudice of *liberty*, that it is an *imperfection*, in compariſon of *neceſſity*. The force of the argument, I think, is as follows, *namely*, *firſt*, If a man is neceſſarily determined, from the conſtitution of things, to be *wiſe*, *virtuous*, and *happy*, he will, in that caſe, be *more ſecurely ſo*, than if it be left to his free choice to be either of theſe; becauſe, in the latter caſe, he may *miſcarry*, but, in the former, he cannot; therefore,

therefore, neceſſity is a greater *perfection* than liberty. *Secondly*, Liberty impowers men to chuſe *evil*, as ſuch, or, at leaſt, to chuſe the *leſs* good, whereas neceſſity confines mens choice to the *greater* good; and, therefore, it is a *perfection*, in compariſon of liberty. *Thirdly*, Liberty ſubjects men to more *wrong* choices than neceſſity; becauſe a man, who is determined in his choice by the *appearing nature of things*, never makes a wrong choice, but when he *errs* in his *judgment*; whereas a being, who is *indifferent* to all objects, and ſwayed by *no motives*, in his choice of objects, which is the caſe of *free beings*, chuſes, at a *venture*, and only makes a right choice, when it *happens*; and, therefore, neceſſity is more *perfect* than liberty. *Fourthly*, Liberty deſtroys the uſe of our *ſenſes*, our *appetites*, our *paſſions*, and our *reaſon*, which are given to direct us in our purſuit of happineſs, and to preſerve our being; whereas neceſſity preſerves to us the uſe of theſe; and, therefore, neceſſity is a *greater perfection* than liberty. *Fifthly*, Whatever is perfect is *neceſſarily* ſo; and whatever depends upon free choice may be *imperfect*, and is, by conſequence, imperfect; and, therefore, neceſſity is *more perfect* than liberty, and, conſequently, is the *truth* of the caſe.

To which I anſwer, *firſt*, that if *all men* were wiſe, virtuous, and happy, then, there might be ſome foundation for *this branch* of the argument; whereas it is as evident that *folly*, *vice*, and *miſery* take place in the world, as it is that *wiſdom*, *virtue*, and *happineſs* do ſo. And, if ſome men are *neceſſarily* wiſe, virtuous, and happy, then, others are as *neceſſarily* fooliſh, vicious, and miſerable. And, admitting, for argument-ſake, that men can be neceſſarily wiſe, and virtuous, and likewiſe happy, in conſequence of theſe; yet ſeeing all men *are not ſo*, but ſome are neceſſarily the *contrary*, there-

fore,

fore, liberty is more *perfect* than neceſſity. For tho' thoſe perſons who are neceſſarily wiſe, and virtuous, and likewiſe happy, in conſequence thereof, are *more ſurely ſo*, than if theſe were left to their free choice, becauſe, in the latter caſe, there is a *poſſibility* of their being the *contrary*; yet thoſe who are neceſſarily fooliſh, and vicious, and likewiſe miſerable, in conſequence of theſe, are in a very *deplorable* and *pitiable* ſtate, becauſe it is not a matter of *free choice* to them, whether they will *be ſo, or not*. And, therefore, the *diſadvantage* of the *latter*, in a ſtate of neceſſity, is much *greater* than the diſadvantage of the *former*, in a ſtate of liberty. The former, in a ſtate of *liberty*, is left to his *free choice*, whether he will be fooliſh, and vicious, and conſequently miſerable, or not; whereas the latter, in a ſtate of *neceſſity*, is *neceſſarily* ſo, *independent* of his election; which renders neceſſity, upon the whole, *leſs perfect*, and a much more *unfair* and an *unequal* conſtitution of things, than that of a ſtate of liberty. If it ſhould be ſaid, that thoſe who are neceſſarily fooliſh, vicious, and miſerable, are ſo, thro' ſome weakneſs or defect in their *underſtanding*, which renders them uncapable of *diſcerning*, what is their *greater good*, or the *way* to attain it; and that if this *defect*, in point of judgment, were added a *liberty* of *choice*, then, the preſent conſtitution of things would be much *leſs perfect* than it is. I *anſwer*, that as, in the preſent conſtitution of things, a *fallible* * judgment is *unavoidable*, how *imperfect* and *inconvenient* ſoever it may be ſuppoſed to be, becauſe a man cannot poſſibly diſcover all the circumſtances and conſequences which attend

* *Note*, By a *fallible judgment*, I mean ſuch as is liable to be miſled by a wrong or by an imperfect perception of things, which is the caſe of man.

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ſome caſes; ſo a *liberty* of *choice*, with reſpect to happineſs, in the preſent conſtitution of things, as far as our happineſs depends upon our own *agency*, is likewiſe *unavoidable*, how *imperfect* and *inconvenient* ſoever ſuch a liberty of choice may be ſuppoſed to be; becauſe there are *various kinds* of pleaſure, which ſuit and affect the various parts of our conſtitution, and which offer themſelves, as *candidates* for our election; and becauſe *agency* and *neceſſity* are *incompatible*. For as a ſelf-moving power, which is *eſſential* to agency, cannot be moved or cauſed to be exerted, by a cauſe *external* to itſelf, for, then, it will not be a *ſelf-moving* power; ſo, when it is exerted, there muſt be a power and liberty either to *exert* it, or to *ſuſpend* the exertion of that power; becauſe, if it is neceſſarily exerted, then, the ground of that neceſſity muſt be *in*, and *from* itſelf, *independent* of every thing *external* to itſelf; and as, in ſuch a caſe, there muſt be ſome thing in nature which is the *ground* of that neceſſity; ſo ſuch neceſſity would *always* cauſe the exertion of that power, except it be *reſtrained* by ſome *external* cauſe; whereas *experience* ſhews that this is not the caſe. If it ſhould be ſaid, that tho' a ſelf-moving power *cannot* be *cauſed* to be exerted, by a cauſe external to itſelf; yet external things may give *occaſion* for that *exertion*, as well when ſuch exertion is the produce of *neceſſity*, as when it the produce of a *free choice*; and thus the perception of the *greater good* gives occaſion for the ſelf-moving power *neceſſarily* to exert itſelf; or, in other words, it will always be *neceſſarily* exerted, when under *ſuch circumſtances*, and not otherwiſe. I *anſwer*, for an *external* thing, or the *perception* of that thing, to be the *occaſion* of a ſelf-moving power neceſſarily to exert itſelf, and not be the *ground* of ſuch neceſſity, is to me abſurd. For as, in the preſent

caſe, *motion* cannot take place, without the *perception* of ſome external object or thing, and as it does *neceſſarily reſult* from ſuch a perception; ſo from hence it will follow, that the *external* object, or the *perception* of that object, is the *neceſſary cauſe*, and not the occaſion of ſuch motion, and, conſequently, there is not a *ſelf-moving* power. Whereas, in the caſe of *liberty*, tho' the ſelf-moving power will not be exerted, unleſs ſome motive be the ground or reaſon of it; yet action does not *neceſſarily* follow the perception of ſuch a motive, but a man is at liberty to *exert* or *ſuſpend* the exertion of that power, notwithſtanding. So that, as far as our *own happineſs* depends upon our *own agency*, it muſt, in the nature of the thing, depend upon our *own free choice* alſo. To this I may add, that *wiſdom* and *folly*, except ſuch folly as is expreſſed by the term *idiotiſm*, *virtue*, and *vice*, when applied to a perſon, cannot poſſibly be the produce of *neceſſity*; theſe being conſtituted not by a *right* or *wrong* perception or judgment of things, but by a *wiſe*, or *fooliſh*, a *virtuous*, or a *vicious* choice, and *choice* ſuppoſes liberty. Again, I anſwer, *ſecondly*, that neceſſity does not confine our choice to the *greater* good; but, on the contrary, it takes away *all* choice, neceſſity and choice being *incompatible*. Choice ſtands oppoſed to *compulſion*, whether that compulſion be the reſult of an *external cauſe*, or whether it reſults *neceſſarily* from the *conſtitution* of the ſubject, thus compelled; ſo that liberty is *eſſentially* neceſſary to the idea of *choice*. And, therefore, to ſuppoſe a man *capable* of chuſing, and likewiſe that his choice is *neceſſarily* confined to the greater good, when there are *ſeveral goods* offered, as the *objects* of his election; this is abſurd, and a contradiction. And, if we ſay that a man *cannot* chuſe the *leſs* good; this cannot, is not of *nature*'s, but of our *own* making. Again, I anſwer; *thirdly*, that liberty does not *deſtroy* the difference

difference in things, nor render all objects and motives *indifferent* to the person, in which it resides, but the contrary; because the difference in things is the *ground* and foundation of choice, and choice supposes liberty, as I have already observed. Suppose a *less* present good comes in competition with a *greater* that is future, and suppose a man at *liberty* to chuse either; if he chuses the *former*, it is not, because it is the *less*, but because it is a *present* good; and, if he chuses the *latter*, it is not, because it is *future*, but because it is the *greater* good; and it is the *difference* of objects, which admits of different *comparisons*, that is the ground and foundation of his choice, in either case; so that he does not chuse, at a *venture*, as the present argument supposes. Again, I answer, *fourthly*, that liberty does not *destroy* the use of our *senses*, our *appetites*, our *passions*, and our *reason*; but, on the contrary, it plainly supposes the *use* of them. For tho' motives are *not* the cause, yet they are the *occasion* of action; seeing the active faculty will not be exerted, unless some motive be the ground or reason of it. And, therefore, suppose *appetite* and *reason* come in *competition*, with respect to man's choice, and suppose him at *liberty* to follow either, his liberty, in this case, does not take away the use of his *appetite*, or his *reason*, but plainly supposes the *use* of both; because, without the use of these, there would be no place for *choice*. Again, I answer, *fifthly*, that *perfections* are usually distinguished into *natural* and *moral*. By *natural* perfections are meant such as *necessarily* result from the *nature* and *constitution* of any being; and, thus, the *divine understanding* and the *divine power* are called *natural perfections* in *God*. By *moral* perfections are meant such as result from the *will* or *choice* of any being; and, thus, the *divine wisdom* and the

divine goodneſs are called the *moral perfections* of the *Deity*; becauſe theſe do not reſult neceſſarily from his nature, but depend upon his will. That is, God is perfectly *wiſe* and *good*, as, or becauſe he *chuſes* always to act a wiſe and a good part. So that to ſay, nothing is perfect, but what is *neceſſarily* ſo, is to deſtroy all *moral* perfections. If it ſhould be ſaid that God is *neceſſarily wiſe* and *good*. I *anſwer*, that whatever perfection reſults *naturally*, and *neceſſarily*, from the conſtitution of any being, that is not a *moral*, but only a *natural* perfection; and, in this caſe, wiſdom and goodneſs, are not the wiſdom and goodneſs of a *perſon*, but of a *conſtitution*, if I may ſo ſpeak, and may as properly be aſcribed to a *clock*, when all its parts and movements are fitly adjuſted, to anſwer a wiſe and a good purpoſe. For tho' one is *intelligent*, and the other *unintelligent*, and tho' intelligence is neceſſary in *one* ſubject, and *not* in the other, to anſwer the purpoſes of each; yet as motion, together with its directions and regulations, *reſult neceſſarily* from the *conſtitution* of each ſubject, *independent* of the free choice or election of either; therefore, they are not *moral*, nor *perſonal*, but *natural*, and *conſtitutional perfections* in both; tho', I think, when we aſcribe wiſdom and goodneſs to *God*, we conſider them of another kind, and more valuable, than when we aſcribe wiſdom and goodneſs to a *clock*. Upon the whole, I obſerve, that as this argument is founded, for the moſt part, on *groundleſs principles*; ſo to argue, from the *degrees* of perfection, to the *truth* of things, is very *unſafe*; becauſe it may lead us into *error*. Thus, it is moſt evident, and, I preſume, it admits of no diſpute, that an *infallible* judgment is *more perfect* than a *fallible* judgment; becauſe the former is *abſolutely ſecure* from error, whereas the latter is *liable* to it. Now, to ſay, in this

this caſe, that becauſe an *infallible* judgment is *more perfect* than a *fallible* judgment, therefore, *man* has an *infallible* judgment, would be to draw a concluſion which is manifeſtly *falſe*, in fact. Again,

Fifthly, It is urged, in prejudice of *liberty*, that it is *deſtructive* of *morality*, and that it renders *rewards* and *puniſhments* uſeleſs; ſeeing liberty deſtroys the *difference* in things, and renders all objects and motives *indifferent* to the perſon, in which it reſides. To which it is ſufficient to anſwer, that this argument is founded upon a *groundleſs preſumption*, as I have ſhewn above. *Natural good* and *evil* are *pleaſure* and *pain*, or happineſs and miſery; *moral good* and *evil* are the *right* or the *wrong* application of that power, which is lodged in every intelligent being, to *introduce* or *communicate* pleaſure and pain, or happineſs and miſery, as aforeſaid. And as things are thus *diſtinct* and *different* in themſelves; ſo that difference is the *ground* and *foundation* of choice, and *choice* ſuppoſes liberty. But, for the farther clearing of this point, I beg leave to obſerve, that, when a *leſs* preſent good comes in competition with a *greater* that is future, theſe goods admit of a *twofold* compariſon; *firſt*, with reſpect to *degree*, one is *leſs*, and the other is *greater*; *ſecondly*, with reſpect to *time*, one is *preſent*, and the other *future*: Now, let a man chuſe either of theſe, upon the principles of liberty, theſe objects are *not* indifferent to him, neither does he chuſe, at a *venture*, as the preſent argument ſuppoſes; but, on the contrary, it is the *difference* in thoſe goods, in one or other of the *forementioned compariſons*, which is the ground and foundation of his choice, in either caſe. As to *rewards* and *puniſhments*, I have elſewhere ſhewn, what is the ground and foundation of them, in my former *Reflections on Natural Liberty*, to which I refer my reader. Again,

Sixthly, It is urged in prejudice of *liberty*, that as man is a creature capable of *pleaſure* and *pain*; ſo he cannot but *deſire* thoſe things he judgeth will *promote* his pleaſure, or *remove* his pain, and be *averſe* to whatever tends to the *contrary*. And as his deſire is thus *neceſſarily* excited; ſo he cannot but *will*, or *nill*, the acting agreeably to his *greater degree* of either of theſe. And that this is the truth of the caſe is inferred from hence, *viz.* it is judged as evident that theſe do follow one another, as that any other effect does, or will follow its *phyſical cauſe*. Upon which I obſerve, that *all pleaſure*, conſidered as pleaſure, is the *natural object of deſire*; and *all pain*, conſidered as pain, is the *natural object of averſion*. And as pleaſure and pain admit of *degrees*, ſuch as greater, and leſs; ſo deſire and averſion admit of the like diſtinction. And as pleaſure or pain may be *preſent*, or at a *diſtance*; ſo deſire and averſion may be the produce of ſome *preſent affection*, or *paſſion*, or the produce of *judgment*; and, thus, the ſame thing may be the object of deſire excited by ſome preſent affection, and yet be the object of averſion ariſing from judgment; or it may be the object of averſion ariſing from ſome preſent paſſion, and yet be the object of deſire ariſing from judgment. Thus, a man's *judgment* may lead him to *deſire* that bitter *potion*, which his *natural affection*, or *paſſion*, leads him to *loath*, and be moſt *averſe* to. And as affection and judgment lead a man both to deſire, and to be averſe to the ſame thing; that is, to like it, upon one account, and diſlike it, on another; ſo action does not *neceſſarily* follow either, but flows from a principle *diſtinct* and *different* from them both. For if deſire ariſing from either *affection*, or *judgment*, did neceſſarily move and direct the active faculty, then, action would, in *every inſtance*, follow the one, or, in *every inſtance*, it would follow

follow the other; but *experience* ſhews that this is not the caſe; becauſe, in ſome inſtances, action follows ſuch deſires as are the produce of *appetite*, or *affection*, and, in others, it follows ſuch deſires as are the produce of *reaſon* or *judgment*, when theſe come in competition. So that, tho' *deſire*, in one or other of thoſe views, does always *precede* action; yet it does not, in either caſe, *neceſſarily* determine the active faculty, it being a matter of *free choice* to a man, which of them ſhall be the *ground* or *reaſon* of action to him. And, therefore, tho' *preſent pleaſure* naturally excites the affection of *deſire*, and *preſent pain*, or the pain which is immediately in view, naturally excites the affection, or paſſion, which we call *averſion*; yet experience ſhews, that ſuitable action does not neceſſarily follow either of theſe; becauſe a man can *deny* himſelf the preſent enjoyment of the moſt *pleaſing*, in point of affection, and thereby the moſt *deſirable* object, and he can chuſe the moſt *acute*, and thereby the pain which nature is moſt *averſe* to. And when *two goods* come in competition, a greater, and a leſs; or when *two evils* likewiſe come in competition, tho' a man cannot judge of theſe otherwiſe, than as the caſe appears to his underſtanding; yet ſuitable *willing*, or *nilling*, does not neceſſarily follow; becauſe experience ſhews, that, in ſome inſtances, men act agreeably to their *judgment*, and in others, they act *againſt* it. Thus, the *drunkard*, as I obſerved above, will ſometimes *gratify* his deſire of liquor, tho' he is reminded of, and convinced, at the time, that it will draw on him ſuch *diſorder* and *pain*, as will be much more than an equivalent to the pleaſure he taſtes from his preſent enjoyment; and this, I think, is acting *againſt* judgment. Again, there is no man who believes a *future ſtate* of rewards and puniſhments, but deſires to be *happy* in ano-

ther world, and who, in point of *judgment*, prefers and desires the eternal happiness of another world, before all the pleasures he is capable of enjoying in this; and this, I think, is the greatest degree of *desire* arising from judgment; because there is no desirable object, in point of judgment, which is equal to it; and yet there are many persons who, upon the *view* of a present enjoyment, will *hazard* the happiness of another world, for the sake of a short-lived pleasure here, and, when the enjoyment is over, their foolish choice gives them great *remorse* and *uneasiness* of mind. If it should be said, that, in such instances, the desire arising from affection was *stronger* than that arising from judgment, and that this was the natural and necessary *ground* of such a choice. I *answer*, That desires arising from appetite, or affection, and desires arising from judgment, are not *greater*, or *less*, with respect to each other; because there is not any thing in nature to be the *foundation* of such a distinction, they not being capable of being compared; so that what is urged is of no force. If it should be said, that desires arising from affection are, in their *kind*, strong, and have a greater influence upon the active faculty in man, than desires arising from judgment. I *answer*, If this were the case, then, when affection and judgment come in *competition*, action would always follow *affection*; whereas experience shews the contrary; seeing, in many instances, men *controul* their affections, and act *agreeably* to their reason. Upon the whole, I think, it appears that the *greater degree* of desire, or aversion, does not *necessarily* determine the active faculty, as is here supposed. Again,

Seventhly, It is thought that there is a *difference* betwixt *constitution*, and the *motives* to action arising from it; and these are considered, as *two* distinct principles or excitements to action in man.

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That is, if I underſtand the caſe aright, there is a difference betwixt *reaſon*, conſidered as a part of the *human conſtitution*, and a *motive* ariſing from *reaſon*; and likewiſe betwixt *appetite*, or *affection*, conſidered, as a part of that *conſtitution*, and a *motive* ariſing from *appetite*, and each of theſe are conſidered, as excitements to actions diſtinct from each other. And that, when man does not act *ugreeably* to his greater degree of deſire, or averſion, whether theſe are the produce of affection, or judgment, it is becauſe he is *neceſſarily* determined, from his *conſtitution*, to act otherwiſe.

Upon which I obſerve, that this *diſtinction* has no foundation in nature. For what is underſtanding or reaſon, as a part of the human conſtitution, but a *capacity* of diſcerning the *fitneſs* or *unfitneſs* of an action? and what is a motive from reaſon, but an invitation to act, or not to act, *conſonant* to that fitneſs or unfitneſs, ariſing from the *exerciſe* of our diſcerning faculty, as aforeſaid? So that a motive from reaſon is not a principle or foundation of action, diſtinct from our reaſoning faculty, but flows from the exerciſe of it. And what is *affection*, or *appetite*, when conſidered as a part of the *human conſtitution*, but a *capacity* or diſpoſition to taſte ſome ſenſual pleaſure; and what is a *motive* from *appetite*, but an *exertion* of that diſpoſition, in deſiring to taſte ſuch pleaſure; which deſire is an invitation to enjoyment; ſo that here is a *diſtinction*, without a *difference*. It is true, a particular conſtitution may taſte more intenſe pleaſure from one ſenſual enjoyment than from another, and that will afford a motive or reaſon for *preferring* in our choice that particular kind of enjoyment to any other, when theſe come in competition; but, in this caſe, their is no difference betwixt *conſtitution*, and the *motives* ariſing from it, neither does conſtitution *neceſſarily* determine the active

faculty;

faculty; becauſe we not only *can*, but do, in ſome inſtances, *controul* it in all its branches. That is, at ſome times, we *deny* ourſelves that pleaſure which our natural appetite leads us moſt ſtrongly to deſire; and, in other inſtances, we *gratify* our appetite, in oppoſition to our reaſon. Again,

Eighthly, There is a diſtinction made betwixt men of *weak* and *ſtrong reaſon*, and likewiſe betwixt men of *weak* and *ſtrong appetites*; and men are ſuppoſed to be *neceſſarily* determined to act, or not to act, as either of theſe are *ſtronger* or *weaker* in them. Upon which I obſerve, that if by this be meant, that ſome men are naturally better qualified to *diſcern* and *judge* of the fitneſs or unfitneſs of an action, than others; and this makes men to be of ſtrong or of weak reaſon; then, I ſay that where the fitneſs or unfitneſs of an action is *not diſcerned*, there a motive from reaſon does not take place; and, conſequently, ſuch an inſtance does not come into the preſent queſtion; and if the fitneſs or unfitneſs of an action *is diſcerned*, then, reaſon is not ſtronger, or weaker, but is the ſame in *every man*; *viz.* it diſcerns the fitneſs or unfitneſs of the action, and that it is more or leſs ſo; and this is diſcerned by every man; and there is not more or leſs diſcerned by any man. And, in this view of the caſe, the forementioned diſtinction does not anſwer any purpoſe. But if by *ſtrong* or *weak* reaſon, be meant men's making, or not making reaſon the *general rule* and meaſure of their actions, ſo that men of *ſtrong* reaſon are thoſe who *generally* act agreeable to reaſon, and thereby *controul* their appetites and paſſions more eaſily, and with leſs reluctancy; and men of *ſtrong* appetites are ſuch as *generally* follow what their *naturally* appetites lead them to deſire, and thereby thoſe appetites are *reſtrained* with greater reluctancy; then, I ſay, that to be of *ſtrong* or of *weak* reaſon, *&c.* is a matter of

of *free choice* to every man; becauſe he may make either reaſon, or appetite, the rule of action to himſelf, as he pleaſes. So that neither reaſon, nor appetite, let them be conſidered in what way ſoever, neceſſarily determine men to act, as is here ſuppoſed. Again,

Ninthly, It is urged that man is under a neceſſity to act, if he is *influenced* by any motive whatever, provided ſome *equal* or *greater* motive doth not hinder, and *experience* is urged, as proof, in the preſent caſe. Upon which I obſerve, that motives, ariſing from the *ſame branch* of the conſtitution, may be *greater*, or *leſs*; but motives, which ariſe from *different branches* of the conſtitution, admit of *no* compariſon. As thus, my *deſire* to *drink* may be greater, or leſs, as the liquor is more or leſs deſirable, or as my thirſtineſs is greater or leſs, which excites that deſire; and the *reaſonableneſs* or *unreaſonableneſs* of my gratifying that deſire may be greater, or leſs, in proportion to the greater or leſs good, or evil, I may ſuſtain thereby; but if *reaſon* and *appetite* come in *competition*, it is not the greater or leſs motive, with reſpect to theſe, but a *freedom* of *election* which is the foundation of action, with reſpect to either. For tho' *motives* from appetites may be ſtronger, or weaker, as I obſerved, when compared with each other, and tho' *motives* from reaſon may admit of the like diſtinction, yet a motive from *appetite* and a motive from *reaſon* cannot be *greater*, or *leſs*, with reſpect to each other, becauſe there is not any *foundation* in nature for ſuch a diſtinction. And, therefore, when men judge that a perſon is under a *neceſſity* to act from any motive whatever, if ſome equal or greater motive doth not hinder, becauſe, they think, they *experience* this to be their caſe; all that they experience, I think, is only this; *viz.* that with reſpect to action, *ſometimes* they follow

their

their *reaſon*, and *ſometimes* their appetite, when it is a matter of *free choice* to them, which of theſe they will follow. And whichſoever of theſe *they do follow*, that is, whichſoever of theſe is to them the *ground* or *reaſon* of action, that, in that inſtance, they call the *ſtrongeſt* motive; and the motive whoſe perſuaſive influence they *reject*, that, in this inſtance they call the *weakeſt*; the determination itſelf being the only *ground* of that diſtinction.

Theſe few points I have here taken notice of, becauſe I would remove every *difficulty* which the principle of *liberty*, and which, I think, is the *truth* of the caſe, may be ſuppoſed to be *incumbered* with. I will conclude with recommending one thing to my reader's conſideration; *viz.* if *action* in man, allowing the expreſſion to be the produce of *neceſſity*; then, *ſelf-conſciouſneſs* of the *good*, or *evil*, of our actions is a groſs *deluſion*; becauſe it was not in a man's power to have done otherwiſe than he did; and the *pleaſure*, or *unhappineſs*, which naturally flows from ſuch a conſciouſneſs, is, in *reaſon*, *groundleſs*. But, I think, the principle of ſelf-conſciouſneſs, of the good, or evil, of our actions, which naturally introduces happineſs, or unhappineſs, as aforeſaid, is *natural*, and a part of the *human conſtitution*; and if this be the caſe as, I think, it is, then, ſurely, it will be allowed, that the placing ſuch a principle in the human conſtitution muſt be *wrong*, becauſe it is an *unreaſonable* introduction to miſery: and, if ſo, then, I think, it will be difficult to *account* for ſuch wrong conduct in God, that is, for his placing ſuch a principle of ſelf-conſciouſneſs in man which in *reaſon*, ought not to be in him, whether we conſider action in *God*, as the produce of *liberty*, or *neceſſity*.

If

If it ſhould be ſaid, that tho' the pleaſure and uneaſineſs, which naturally flow from a conſciouſneſs of the good, or evil, of our actions, are, in *reality*, *groundleſs*; yet this anſwers a *good purpoſe*, by leading men to the practiſing the like good actions, and preventing them from practiſing the like evil ones, and, therefore, ſuch a conſciouſneſs was *rightly* placed in human nature. I *anſwer*, The *remorſe* and *uneaſineſs* of mind, which flows from the conſciouſneſs of having done a *bad* action, is very often the immediate attendant of thoſe actions, which are the grounds of it; and tho' thoſe bitter reflections will, upon *ſome occaſions*, return upon a man; yet it is ſeldom, when he is in the *perſuit* of any enjoyment, but rather, when thoſe perſuits *are over*, and he is taking a *review* of them, or when under ſome *affliction*, or at the *apprehenſion* of death, and at ſuch times as not to anſwer the purpoſes of *reſtraint* to him. So that the conſciouſneſs of having done a bad action is not only *groundleſs* in itſelf, but it is an *unreaſonable* introduction to *miſery*, ſuppoſing action in *man* to be the produce of *neceſſity*.

TRACT

TRACT XXIX.

THE

GLORY of CHRIST:

OR,

A Diſcourſe upon thoſe Words, as they are in St. *Paul*'s ſecond Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. viii. Verſe 23. Wherein is ſhewn, That the *Chriſtian Salvation* is the only proper Expedient to take away Divine Diſpleaſure, and to render Men truly acceptable and well-pleaſing to *God*. Humbly offer'd to the Conſideration of the Modern *Deiſts*.

IT will be needleſs for me to enquire, who was the *author* of this *epiſtle*, and to whom it was ſent? This being ſpecified in the title; *namely*, that it was wrote by the *Apoſtle* St. *Paul*, and was directed to the *Corinthians*; that is, to the *Chriſtians* at *Corinth*, an antient city in *Greece*. Neither ſhall I, at preſent, concern myſelf to enquire into the *ſubject* of this epiſtle, any farther than to obſerve, that as the *Chriſtians*, at that time in *Judea*, were driven into great ſtreights and difficulties, thro' the violent perſecutions which the *Jews* ſtirr'd up againſt them; ſo St. *Paul*, who ſympathiz'd with them in their afflictions, did all he could

could to render their burden as eaſy to them as poſſibly. And, accordingly, he took care to acquaint the ſeveral churches, which were under his inſpection, with the afflicted ſtate of their brethren in *Judea*; and call'd upon them to raiſe contrabutions for their relief. And thus, he addreſs'd himſelf to the *Corinthians*, provoking them by the example of the great leberality of their neighbours, the *Macedonians*; and ſtirring them up, by many other arguments, to a chearful and a generous diſtribution of their charity. Upon this occaſion, he likewiſe ſent *Titus* and others to *Corinth*, to collect and receive their contributions; men who had devoted themſelves to promote the *common tranquility*, and, therefore, were highly worthy of ſuch a truſt. And, as it was very natural and proper for the *Corinthians* to enquire, *who* or *what* the perſons were, by whoſe hand they ſhould ſend this gift? ſo St *Paul* took care to ſatisfy them in this particular, by giving them a character, in the verſe of which the text is a part.

Whether any do enquire of Titus, *he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquir'd of, they are the meſſengers of the churches and* the glory of Chriſt. As much as if he had ſaid, if any aſk the character of *Titus*, I preſume, this will ſatisfy he is my partner in the *labours* and *ſufferings* of the *goſpel*. and aſſiſted me much in my travels and preaching to the *Gentiles*. Or, if our *brethren*, whom I have ſent with him, be enquir'd of, they are perſons of ſuch reputation, and whoſe character and conduct are ſo well approv'd of by the churches, that they have conſtituted them their *meſſengers*. Yea, they are ſuch, upon whom the *goſpel* has had its *genuine effect*, and who reflect back great *honour* upon its *author*: they are the glory of Chriſt. As the *ſucceſs* of any undertaking *crowns* the attempt, and gives *glory* to the *undertaker*;

dertaker; and as every performance brings more or leſs glory to the performer, as it more or leſs anſwers the deſign; ſo *Chriſt* receiv'd *much glory* from the *brethren* whom St, *Paul* ſent to *Corinth* inaſmuch as the purpoſes of his miniſtry were anſwer'd upon them. The goſpel of Chriſt had made ſuch an impreſſion upon their minds, as that they could willingly forego their own *eaſe*, *pleaſure*, and *profit*, when their labour and ſervice became uſeful and neceſſary to the *common good*. And, accordingly, they took upon them that long, laborious, and hazardous work, of going from place to place, in the provinces of *Greece*, to collect the churches contributions, for relieving their diſtreſſed brethren under perſecution, and to carry what they had thus collected to *Paleſtine*. This I call a long, laborious, and hazardous undertaking; whether they travelled from *Greece* to *Judea*, by land, or by ſea. And, thus, theſe brethren gave a noble inſtance of the bleſſed effects of the goſpel of Chriſt, when it is receiv'd as it ought to be; and, thus, Chriſt receiv'd much glory from them. They were the glory of Chriſt. This is the character St. *Paul* gives of the perſons referr'd to, which certainly render'd them worthy of that truſt, he deſir'd the *Corinthians* might repoſe in them. Having ſhewn the *occaſion*, and given the *ſenſe* of the text; two things naturally offer themſelves to be conſider'd, *viz. firſt*, What was the grand purpoſe of Chriſt's miſſion? And, *ſecondly*, how the means he uſed were adapted to anſwer that deſign? Theſe two points being diſcurs'd, from hence it will eaſily and evidently appear, in the *third place*, What it is to glorify Chriſt, and who they are that in reality do ſo. Again,

Firſt, I am to conſider, *What was the grand purpoſe of Chriſt's miſſion?* And, here, if we examine thoſe ſacred records, which relate to his perſon

ſon and miniſtry, and which alone are capable of giving us ſatisfaction in the preſent caſe; we ſhall find, that the great end which Chriſt had to proſecute, and for which he was ſent into this world, *was to take away divine diſpleaſure, and to render men acceptable and well-pleaſing to God.* Thus, it was propheſied of him, *Iſaiah* xlix. 6. *That he ſhould be given for light to the* Gentiles; *and that he ſhould be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth,* Acts xiii. 47. Thus, *Zachariah* rejoiced at the birth of *John* the Baptiſt, becauſe *he was to be the Prophet of the Higheſt, who was to give the knowledge of ſalvation to his people by the remiſſion of their ſins,* Luke i. 77. Thus, the angel, at Chriſt's birth, ſaluteth the ſhepherds with this joyful acclamation; *Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which ſhall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of* David, *a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord,* Luke ii. 10, 11. And, thus, Chriſt declar'd concerning himſelf, *that he was come to* ſave *that which was* loſt, as in *Matt.* xviii. 11. *And that he was come, not to* deſtroy mens lives, *but to* ſave them, as in *Luke* ix. 5, 6. *And that he came to* ſeek *and to* ſave *that which was* loſt, *Luke* xix. 10. *And that he came not to* judge the world, *but to* ſave it, *John* xii. 47. And, thus, by way of eminence, Chriſt is call'd *a Saviour,* and *the Saviour,* and the like, *Acts* v. 30, 31. *Chap.* xiii. 23. *Phil.* iii. 20. 1 *Tim.* i. 10. *Tit.* i. 4. 1 *John* iv. 14. Thus, again, Chriſt's goſpel is call'd *ſalvation,* Acts xiii. 26. Chap. xxviii. 28. Rom. i. 16. Eph. i. 13. In ſhort, Chriſt's goſpel is call'd the *miniſtry* of *reconciliation*; and he is ſaid to *reconcile us* to *God,* 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. *And all things are of God, who hath* reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt; *and hath committed unto us the* miniſtry of reconciliation, *to wit, that God was, in Chriſt,* reconciling *the world unto himſelf, not imputing their*

treſpaſſes unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word *of* reconciliation. From all which, I think, it abundantly appears, that the *grand end and purpoſe of Chriſt's miniſtry* was to take away divine diſpleaſure, and to render men acceptable and well-pleaſing to God ; which was the firſt point that lay before me to be conſider'd. And, now, I proceed to the

Second, namely, to ſhew, *How the means, Chriſt made uſe of, were adapted to anſwer that deſign.* But, before I do this, there is one thing which is very neceſſary to be enquir'd into, *viz.* what it is, in the nature of the thing, which renders men the ſuitable and proper objects of divine diſpleaſure ? For, when we have thus diſcovered the *diſeaſe*, then, we ſhall be much better qualify'd to diſcern and judge, whether the means, Chriſt made uſe of, were a *proper remedy* againſt it ? That, then, which I am, at preſent, to enquire into, is this ; *viz. what it is, in the nature of the thing, which renders men the ſuitable and proper objects of divine diſpleaſure ?* And this, I think, will eaſily appear, when we conſider, what kind of creature man is, as he came out of his Maker's hand, *viz.* that he is a dependent creature, who, in his natural compoſition, is framed and conſtituted for ſociety. By a *dependent creature*, I mean, that every individual has a mutual dependence upon each other ; and that man, when conſider'd alone, is not qualified to be happy ; becauſe, in a ſingle capacity, he is not capable of procuring the comforts, nor guarding againſt the evils of life. And, by being *fram'd and conſtituted for ſociety*, I mean, that man's natural appetites, his affections, his underſtanding, and his ſpeech qualify him for, and diſpoſe him to ſociety ; and that the greateſt part of his enjoyment ariſes from ſociety. So that, I think, it may be ſaid with ſtrict juſtice, that man

is

is a ſocial creature, or a creature, who, in his natural compoſition, is framed and conſtituted for ſociety, or for the being happy with others of his kind. And as man is, thus, fitly conſtituted to promote and carry on the common happineſs; ſo he is capable of the *contrary*. Each and every of his appetites and paſſions are capable of being *vitiated*, by being exerciſed upon wrong objects, or by being indulged to an exceſs; by which means, man becomes a diſagreeable and hurtful creature; and is ſo far from contributing to the *common good*, that, on the contrary, his ſelfiſh, brutal, and inhuman temper and conduct ſtands as a *bar* to it. And, when, or where-ever this is the caſe, ſuch men muſt be exceeding *vile* and *diſagreeable* in the *eyes* of *God*, their minds and conduct being directly oppoſite to the mind and conduct of their Maker, and their deſigns and endeavours being to fruſtrate and diſappoint God's kind intentions towards his creatures.

God is a Being, in whom *all moral perfections* take place, in the higheſt degree; and, therefore, as *ſelfiſhneſs* could not poſſibly be the motive, which induced him to call any of his creatures into being; ſo, of courſe, it muſt be *true goodneſs*; that is, a true regard to the happineſs and well-being of the creatures themſelves, which excited him to it. And as this planet is made a convenient habitation for a multitude of creatures, who have a mutual dependence upon each other, and whoſe happineſs is bound up in the happineſs of the whole, if I may ſo ſpeak, ſo the *common felicity* was the common and the only end, which God propos'd, in giving being to this world. And as God has made man a ſocial creature; ſo the *happineſs of ſociety*, or, in other words, the *publick good*, was the great end which God intended that man ſhould be in the purſuit of, and

to which all his actions ſhould be principally directed. And when man carefully purſues the great end of his creation, by rendering himſelf an agreeable and uſeful creature; then, of courſe, he renders himſelf *agreeable* and *lovely* in the eyes of his Maker. And, on the other ſide, when he oppoſes this end, and ſets himſelf as a bar to the common felicity, he muſt lay a *juſt foundation* for divine diſpleaſure. I ſhall not take upon me to ſhew, how many ways, and in what inſtances, men are *injurious* to the common-wealth; it being ſufficient to my preſent purpoſe, to obſerve, that when men covetouſly purſue their own pleaſures and deſires, when they are injurious to others, and obſtruct the common felicity; they, then, in the nature of the thing, become the *proper objects* of God's diſpleaſure. Surely, nothing can be more provoking to ſuch a *wiſe* and *good* Being as God is, than for a moral agent, deſign'd and conſtituted to promote a common happineſs; for ſuch an one to kick againſt his Maker, by diſappointing his gracious purpoſes, and by introducing that *miſery* into being, which he was deſign'd to prevent. And yet this is the caſe of every wicked man, who, by his diſagreeable and unſocial temper and conduct, *obſtructs* the common felicity. Having, thus, diſcover'd the diſeaſes, by ſhewing, *What it is, in the nature of the thing, which renders men the ſuitable and proper objects of divine diſpleaſure?* I, now, proceed to the remedy; *namely*, to ſhew, *How the means, Chriſt made uſe of, become a proper expedient, to take away that diſpleaſure, and to reconcile ſinners to God.* And this I ſhall do, both negatively and poſitively; negatively, *how Chriſt did not do it*, and, poſitively, *how he did do it.* And,

Firſt, I am to ſhew, how Chriſt did not do it; *namely*, *firſt*, he did not reconcile ſinners unto God,

God, *by acting in them*, and *thereby deſtroying their agency*. Surely, nothing can be more romantick and wild, than what has enter'd into the heads of ſome Chriſtians, *viz.* that Chriſt ſaves them, by acting in them, and thereby acting for them. Chriſt is ſuppos'd to take poſſeſſion of the ſinner, as the devil heretofore was ſuppos'd to take poſſeſſion of ſome men; poſſeſſing them, by making uſe of their faculties, and acting in them. And, thus, Chriſt, as they imagine, makes uſe of the faculties of ſinners; *he underſtands*, and *wills*, and *acts in them*, and thereby he *underſtands*, and *wills*, and *acts for them*; they, as they think, having no ability, ſince the fall, to underſtand, will, or act any thing that is *good*, in, or for themſelves. I ſay, Chriſt did not take this method to ſave mankind, by deſtroying their agency, and acting in them; but, on the contrary, he conſider'd man, as a *moral agent*, and treated with him, as ſuch, in order to his ſalvation, as I ſhall ſhew in its due place. Neither, if Chriſt had taken ſuch a method, would it have been effectual to that end. As will appear, if we conſider, that as man, in his natural conſtitution, is a moral agent, which renders him an *accountable creature*; ſo it is the *right* or the *wrong* uſe of his *agency*, and that only, which, in the nature of the thing, can render him agreeable or diſpleaſing to his Maker. And, therefore, to ſuppoſe that God is either pleaſed or diſpleaſed with one agent, for what was done in him by the will and agency of another, is moſt ridiculous and abſurd; ſo that whatever may be the ſenſe of thoſe places in holy writ, which ſpeak of the *Spirit of Chriſt*, the *grace of Chriſt*, or the like; they cannot poſſibly ſignify the *act* of *Chriſt* in man, as above explained. And as the fore-mentioned opinion is exceedingly extravagant in itſelf, ſo it is moſt *pernicious* to *mankind*; becauſe

it diſpoſes the ſinner to go on in his folly, and to neglect his repentance and reformation; he, as he imagines, having no power in himſelf to perform what is good, and, therefore, he muſt wait, 'till *Chriſt* performs that work in him. Again,

Secondly, Chriſt did not ſave ſinners, abſolutely and unconditionally, by any *act* of *obedience* to his Father's will, nor by any *act* of *ſuffering*. If he had lived a *thouſand* years, and had ſuffered a *thouſand deaths*, and had felt a *thouſand times* more pain and miſery, in every death, than the pain and miſery he underwent; this might have rendered him, in his *own perſon*, ſo much the more dear and valuable to his Father; but it could not alter the caſe, with reſpect to God's favour, to any other perſon, whilſt that perſon obſtinately continues in his ſins, and thereby continues the proper object of God's diſpleaſure. Every ſinner is is as much, and as truly, a ſinner, and as much, and as truly, the object of God's diſpleaſure, on the account of his ſins, whilſt he continues in them, without repentance, after the obedience and ſufferings of Chriſt, as before them; and, therefore, tho' theſe are highly ſubſervient to man's ſalvation, yet they are not, abſolutely and unconditionally, the ground and reaſon of God's mercy and loving-kindneſs to mankind.

Thirdly, Chriſt did not reconcile ſinners unto God, by *laying down a ſet of principles, and making mens aſſent to, or diſſent from them, the ground of God's favour, or diſpleaſure.* If this had been the caſe, then, indeed, there would have been ſome ſhow of reaſon, for inſiſting, as the Church of *Rome* does, that there is an *abſolute neceſſity* of an *infallible judge*, to determine in matters of faith, and to guard and ſecure men from all dangerous errors; tho' even this would not afford the ſhadow of a proof, that the *Biſhop of* Rome is that infallible

infallible judge. But this is not the caſe. Faith and infidelity, with regard to any ſubject, can be no farther *valuable*, or *deſpiſable*, than as they are, or as they are not, the proper reſult of that evidence, or the want of it, upon which each of them is grounded. And, even then, theſe cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the *ground* of divine favour, or diſpleaſure; becauſe they are not the ſubjects of our free choice. If we ſee that the concluſion *juſtly* follows from the premiſes, or if we judge the *contrary*; in this caſe, we are ſo far paſſive, as that, if we attend to the ſubject, we cannot poſſibly think and judge otherwiſe of it than we do; and, therefore, it is moſt abſurd and ridiculous, to ſuppoſe that God will ſhew his favour *to one*, for ſeeing what he could not *but ſee*; or his diſpleaſure to another, for not ſeeing what he *could not ſee*. And tho' the *abſurdity* of this appears, at firſt view, yet it has enter'd into the ſchemes of a multitude of Chriſtians. Each church has its *creed* or *ſet of principles*, which are ſet up, as the *ſtandard of chriſtianity*; and men's aſſent to, or diſſent from them, is made the *ground* of divine favour, or diſpleaſure. And as men's underſtandings have been thus miſled; ſo it has been of the moſt *fatal* conſequence to mankind, inaſmuch as it hath laid a foundation for that angry and bitter zeal, by which Chriſtians have *perſecuted* and *deſtroyed* one another. Again,

Fourthly, Chriſt did not reconcile ſinners unto God, by *conſtituting a particular ſociety, or body of men, and making communion with them the ground of divine favour, and ſeparation from the ground of divine diſpleaſure.* I have already ſhewn, that man is a ſocial creature, and that the great end which God intended he ſhould be in purſuit of, and to which all his actions ſhould be principally directed,

rected, is the *common felicity*. So that the *one ſociety*, into which man, by *nature*, is enter'd, is the *one common-wealth of mankind*. And tho' the body of mankind is divided into nations, kingdoms, families, cities, villages, trades, and the like; and each of theſe may be ſaid to be particular ſocieties, who have their different intereſts; yet they are *particular*, not in oppoſition to, but only as *parts* and *branches* of the one great ſociety, or common-wealth of mankind. And, therefore, a particular ſociety, in the preſent caſe, muſt be ſuch as we are not, by nature, enter'd into. That is, the ground of our aſſociation does not ariſe from our being *men*; and the end of it is ſomething different from the common felicity. Now, as we are not the *better* by being barely in *communion* with ſuch particular ſocieties; and as we are not the *worſe*, by being barely in a ſtate of *ſeparation* from them; ſo communion, or ſeparation, cannot, in the nature of the thing, be the *ground* of divine favour, or diſpleaſure. But tho' this is evidently the caſe; yet we ſee what ſad work is made in the world upon the account of it. When men conſider each other as *Hereticks*, in point of opinion, or as *Schiſmaticks*, in point of communion; then they *unchriſtian*, yea, *unman* themſelves, by exerting a blind and bitter zeal, in *afflicting* and *grieving* one another. And, thus, chriſtianity is *deſtroyed*, under a ſhow of *maintaining* it. Again,

Fifthly and laſtly, Chriſt did not reconcile ſinners unto God, by *appointing a ſet of ceremonies, and making the uſe, or the neglect of theſe, the ground of divine favour, or diſpleaſure*. A ceremony is an external word, or action, which is made to ſignify whatever the inſtitutor, or the uſer, pleaſes. And as the uſe of a ceremony has no intrinſick or *moral goodneſs* in it; nor the neglect of it any *moral evil*, any otherwiſe than as there is good, or evil,

evil, intended by the agent, or good, or evil, conſequent upon it; ſo barely the *uſe* or *neglect* of theſe cannot, in the nature of the thing, render men more or leſs the *proper objects* of God's favour, or diſpleaſure. And this leads me,

Secondly and poſitively, to ſhew, *How Chriſt did reconcile ſinners unto God*, and *how the means, he made uſe of, were adapted to anſwer that deſign.* I have already obſerv'd, that man is a moral agent, that is, he is a creature endow'd with a faculty of underſtanding, which qualifies him to ſee the nature, the circumſtances, and the conſequences of his actions, and thereby to judge of their moral fitneſs, or unfitneſs. And he has a power, or is at liberty, to direct and govern his actions, as his judgment ſhall direct. And as man is a moral agent; ſo Chriſt treats with him as ſuch, in order to his ſalvation, by applying to his *underſtanding* in the manner following. *Namely*,

Firſt, In calling ſinners to repentance and amendment of life; and in urging the abſolute neceſſity of that repentance, in order to their ſalvation. *Secondly*, In laying down the law of love, as the rule and meaſure of men's duty; requiring them to conduct their lives, that is to ſay, their tempers and actions, by this law; and aſſuring them, that, if they do ſo, they will be approved and accepted of God. And, *thirdly*, by informing mankind, that when they have acted their part in life, and are gone off the ſtage of action, God will call them to an account for their conduct, and will finally acquit, or comdemn them, as they have, or have not, repented and amended their ways, and as they have, or have not, ſubmitted themſelves, and govern'd their tempers and actions, by the law of love, as aforeſaid. This, then, is the way and method which Chriſt made uſe of to ſave ſinners, *viz.* to *change them* from

from diſagreeable and hurtful, to agreeable and uſeful creatures. And as he thus changes ſinners; ſo hereby *God's affections* and *determinations* are changed, with regard to them. For as, before that change, they were the proper objects of his *diſpleaſure*; ſo by it they became the proper objects of his *mercy* and *grace*. And thus Chriſt is *a Saviour to mankind*; thus *he takes away divine diſpleaſure*, and thus *he renders the ſinner*, or rather obliges him to *render himſelf, the proper object of God's favour and love*. And, *firſt*, Chriſt apply'd himſelf to man, as a moral agent, by *calling him to repentance and amendment of life*; *and in urging the abſolute neceſſity of that repentance, in order to his ſalvation*. The doctrine of *repentance* was what Chriſt firſt began to preach, when he enter'd upon his miniſtry. And this doctrine he frequently inculcated upon his hearers; aſſuring them, that no external privilege, no, not the being the *children* of *faithful Abraham*, would be of any ſervice to them, with regard to God's favour, except they repented and did works meet for repentance; and that tho', in this life, ſome ſinners might eſcape many of thoſe evils, which others fell into; yet, except they repented, they ſhould *all* likewiſe *periſh*. And as Chriſt preached the doctrine of repentance to the *Jews*, in his *own perſon*; ſo he commiſſion'd his Apoſtles to *proclaim* it to the *world*. The Apoſtles were ſent forth to acquaint mankind, that as their ſin and folly expos'd them to God's diſpleaſure; ſo their repentance and amendment would recommend them to mercy. And, accordingly, the Apoſtles went forth and preached every-where, that men ſhould repent. And as Chriſt invited, and perſuaded, and even preſs'd men to repentance, if I may ſo ſpeak; ſo by repentance he meant their putting off that *ſelfiſh*, *brutal*, and *inhuman* temper and conduct,

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in which they had *viciouſly indulg'd themſelves*, and by which they became *hurtful* and *injurious* to each other; as alſo their putting on, in oppoſition to it, ſuch an *agreeable* and *uſeful* temper and behaviour, as would render them a *bleſſing* in the creation, and would anſwer the grand purpoſe, *viz.* the common felicity, which, by their natural compoſition, it is plain their Creator intended them for. And this repentance he urg'd, as *abſolutely neceſſary* to the ſinner's ſalvation. Again,

Secondly, Chriſt addreſs'd himſelf to man, as a moral agent, by *laying down the law of love, as the rule and meaſure of his duty, requiring him to conduct his life, that is to ſay, his temper and actions, by this law; and aſſuring him, that, if he does ſo, he will be accepted and approved by God.* Chriſt not only lived a life of love, in his own perſon, or, in other words, a life of humanity, a life ſpent in doing good, and in promoting the one common intereſt of mankind; but he alſo recommended ſuch a life of love, as the *ſure way* to *God's favour*. The law of God is a *law of love*. The firſt and great commandment is, *To love the Lord with all our heart*; and the ſecond is like to it, *namely*, *That we ſhould love our neighbour as ourſelves*; (and by our neighbour is meant all that partake of the ſame common nature with us) and *on theſe two commandments hang all the law and the Prophets*. We are requir'd to love the Lord with all our hearts; but how can we *exerciſe* or *manifeſt* our love to God any other way, than by keeping his *commandments?* And what are God's commandments, but that we ſhould *love one another?* St. *John* ſaith, in his firſt epiſtle, *chap.* v. *verſe* 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments*. And St. *Paul*, Rom. xiii. 9. when he had expreſſed ſeveral negative branches of our duty, to guard and ſecure us from injuring one another; he ſums up the

the whole law in the affirmative, *If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* Love is the beginning, the end, and the perfection of the law; or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, it is *the fulfilling of the law.* And as Chriſt propos'd and required our ſubjection to this law of love; ſo he repreſents it under different characters. He calls it, *The great* commandment, *The old* commandment, *The new* commandment, *His* commandment, His *Father*'s commandment, and the like; that ſo, if poſſible, he might engage us in the love and practice of it. He likewiſe makes our ſubmiſſion to this law the only *ground* and *mark* of our *diſcipleſhip* to him: *Hereby*, ſaith he, *ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.* So that the living a life of love, a life ſpent in doing good to all around us, and in contributing to the common tranquillity all we can, is what Chriſt propos'd and recommended, as the only and the ſure way to God's favour. Again,

Thirdly and laſtly, Chriſt apply'd himſelf to man, as a moral agent, in order to his ſalvation, by *informing and aſſuring him, that when he has acted his part in life, and is gone off the ſtage of action, God will call him to an account for his conduct, and will finally acquit, or condemn him, as he has, or has not, repented and amended his ways, and as he has, or has not ſubmitted himſelf, and directed his temper and actions by the law of love, as aforeſaid.* Chriſt aſſures us, that, after the diſſolution of the preſent ſtate of things, the *body of mankind* ſhall be ſummon'd to appear in *judgment*; and that, as he is conſtituted to be their Judge, ſo he ſhall ſeparate the *righteous* from the *wicked*, as a ſhepherd ſeparates the ſheep from the goats; and he ſhall place the righteous on his right-hand, as a token

token of favour, and the wicked on his left, in token of diſpleaſure. Then he ſhall ſay to thoſe on his right-hand, *Come ye bleſſed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* Ye have ſhewn yourſelves to be my true Diſciples, in that you have conducted yourſelves by the law of love; *for I was*, in my brethren of the common-wealth of mankind, *an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirſty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick and in priſon, and ye came unto me.* And then ſhall he ſay to thoſe on his left-hand *Go ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:* Ye were uſeleſs and unprofitable to your fellow-creatures, in the place and age in which you lived; *for I was*, in my needy members of human ſociety, *an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; naked, and ye clothed me not; I was ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not* And as the *rule* of judging will be the *law of love*, and ſentence will be given, according as men have, or have not, conducted their tempers and actions by this law; ſo no plea will be admitted in the *ſinner's favour*, where obedience to that law has been wanting. *In that day*, ſaith Chriſt, *many ſhall ſay unto me Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works: And then will I ſay unto them, depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity.* Thus, Chriſt apply'd himſelf to men, as moral agents, in order to their ſalvation. And this was the means he uſed to ſave them by; ſo that, in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, this, and this only, is the *chriſtian ſalvation.* And the truth is, there is no other expedient, but this, which could poſſibly be effectual to that end. For as man is a moral agent, and as he, by the abuſe of his agency, in acting

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an unſocial part in the creation, has render'd himſelf the proper object of God's diſpleaſure; ſo, in the nature of the thing, nothing, but a change in man, by his *ceaſing to do evil*, and by a right uſe of his agency in *doing well*, can recommend him to God's mercy and grace. The doing evil is the only foundation of *God's diſpleaſure*; and, therefore, the ceaſing to do evil, and doing the contrary, muſt be the *only proper expedient* to take away that diſpleaſure, and to render men acceptable and well-pleaſing to their Maker. Whilſt men continue in their ſins, they muſt, of courſe, continue the proper objects of God's *diſlike*; and when they forſake their ſins, and return to their duty, acting a part ſuitable to, and becoming their rational and manly nature, they muſt, of courſe, become the proper objects of his *approbation* and *love*; the effecting which change is the way in which Chriſt becomes a *Saviour to mankind*. Thus,

Having ſhewn, in the *firſt place*, What was the grand purpoſe of Chriſt's miſſion, *namely*, to take away divine diſpleaſure, and to render men acceptable and well-pleaſing to God; and having likewiſe ſhewn, in the *ſecond place*, How the means Chriſt made uſe of were proper expedients to anſwer that deſign, from hence, I think, it will evidently appear,

Thirdly, *What it is to glorify Chriſt, and who they are that, in reality, do ſo.* I have already obſerv'd, that it is the *ſucceſs* of any undertaking, which *crowns* the *attempt*, and gives *glory* to the *undertaker*; and that every performance brings more or leſs glory to the performer, as it more or leſs anſwers the deſign. And as Chriſt came to ſave ſinners, by engaging them to turn from the evil of their ways, and to ſubject their tempers and actions to the law of love; ſo, from hence, it will follow, that the only way in which Chriſt is, or

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can be *glorified by us*, as *our Saviour*, is, to let the *gospel* have its due effect, and the purposes of his *ministry* be answer'd upon us; and then we shall be like the *brethren* whom St. *Paul* sent to *Corinth*, *viz.* we shall be *The glory of Christ*. It is not the *giving our assent* to a collection of speculative propositions; nor a *strong confidence* that Christ will save us; nor the being *united* to a society call'd by Christ's name; nor the *constant attendance* upon a set of ceremonial observances; nor the being *noisy* and *troublesome* for Christ, thereby disturbing the peace and quiet of the neighbourhood in which we live; nor the *drinking bumpers* to the *Church's prosperity*; tho' by the way the term *Church*, in modern language, generally signifies the *Clergy*, the authority and rights of the Church being no other than the authority and rights of the Clergy; nor the *afflicting* and *grieving* our fellow-creatures, upon *Christ's account*, either because they are not christians at all, or because they do not come up to our standard of christianity: I say, it is not these, nor the *zeal* and *resentment* that frequently spring from them, which *Christ* is *glorified* by. Some of these minister shame and reproach to the christian name, but none of them minister to Christ's praise. Some of them reflect back great dishonour upon God and Christ, with regard to their moral character; but none of them add to their praise, by shewing them to be either wise or good. The true way to glorify Christ is to *reflect seriously* upon those important truths, which he has published to the world, and to let those truths have their *proper influence* upon our *minds* and *lives*; by changing us from disagreeable and hurtful, to agreeable and useful members of society; and then we shall add *much glory* to Christ our Lord. For as he undertook to save sinners in this way; so when his end is thus answer'd, then it is that Christ is glorified by

by us, Would we, then anſwer the character of *true chriſtians*, and would we bring much glory to *Chriſt*, our *Maſter* and *Saviour?* let us reform our tempers and actions. Let us correct every diſorderly, ſelfiſh, brutal, and inhuman appetite and paſſion and bring every thought into captivity to Chriſt's law of love. Let us put on ſuch a temper and behaviour, as will render us a bleſſing to all around us; by removing every uneaſineſs and every impediment to their happineſs, and by contributing all we can to their comfort and felicity. In a word, Let Chriſt's goſpel have its due effect upon us, by making us *good men*, and then Chriſt will receive much glory from us; we ſhall be *The glory of Chriſt. If any do enquire of* Titus, *he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you; or if the brethren be enquir'd of, they are the meſſengers of the churches, and* The glory of Chriſt. Thus, having gone thro' the ſeveral points which naturally offer'd themſelves to be conſider'd, from the words of the text; I ſhall only make a few ſhort remarks from the whole, and ſo coclude. And,

Firſt, I obſerve, that tho' the *chriſtian ſalvation* is ſo *clearly deſcribed*, and ſo *evidently* ſet forth in the *goſpel*; yet not any thing has been more *generally miſtaken*. Men, yea, chriſtians, have choſen any, yea, every other way to ſalvation, than the way which Chriſt hath ſhewn and recommended to them. They would rather that Chriſt would ſave them, by *acting in them*, or by *doing*, or *ſuffering for them*, or in any other way, than by his *putting it upon them, to work out their own ſalvation, as aforeſaid*. But, alas! none of thoſe ways can poſſibly do it. For as their ſin and folly, which is the ground of divine diſpleaſure, is the *product* of their *own will* and *agency*; ſo nothing but ſuch a *repentance* and *reformation*, which is the product of their own will and agency alſo, can be the

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ground and *reaſon* of God's mercy and loving-kindneſs to them. Again,

Secondly, I obſerve, that *Proteſtantiſm* is not a juſt ground of confidence, with regard to God's favour. For tho' a man ſeperates himſelf from the Church of *Rome*, and joins in communion with a reform'd; yet if he retains a vile and diſſagreeable temper and conduct, he will be vile and diſſagreeable in the eyes of God; his foremention'd reformation will not qualify him to receive that ſentence, of, *Come ye bleſſed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you*, &c. nothing leſs than a mind and life of love, like the mind and life of that heavenly Father, will qualify us for, and entitle us to ſo great a bleſſing. It is true, *Proteſtants* have cut of the abſurd principles, enormous claims, and ſuperſtitious practices of the Church of *Rome*; and thus far they have a juſt foundation for glorying; but, alas! this alone is but a ſuperficial reformation, which, if it proceed no farther, will not avail any thing to ſalvation. This is like waſhing the outſide of the cup and platter, whilſt the inſide, *viz.* our tempers and actions, are full of rottenneſs and all uncleanneſs. Would we then be inform'd in *good earneſt*, and in ſuch a manner as that it may be a proper foundation of *glorying* to us; let us take care that the goſpel of Chriſt may have its *due effect*, and that the purpoſes of Chriſt's miniſtry be *anſwer'd* upon us. Let us correct every diſorderly appetite and paſſion, and conduct our tempers and actions by the law of love, and make our lives ſubſervient to the common felicity; and then we ſhall be reform'd, indeed. Then we ſhall anſwer our character, as *reform'd chriſtian*; yea, we ſhall be *The glory of Chriſt*. Again,

Thirdly, I obſerve, that *ſcepticks* and *infidels* have no *juſt foundation* for glorying over, nor inſulting chriſtianity, as an *abſurd* and an *unreaſonable* pro-

poſal made to mankind; becauſe chriſtianity, or that which may juſtly and truly be call'd the chriſtian ſalvation, is perfectly free from all *ſuch imputations*, being founded in the nature and reaſon of things. It is true, the ſchemes of chriſtians have been too often mix'd and compounded of *ſome true*, and *ſome abſurd* and *contradictory* propoſitions; and this has given too juſt occaſion to unbelievers to *triumph* over chriſtianity, as a *ridiculous* thing. But then it ought to be remember'd, that nothing is ſtrictly and properly the chriſtian ſalvation, but that only which *Chriſt propos'd* to ſave men by. He never pretended to ſave men in any other way, than by engaging them to *make themſelves* the ſuitable and proper objects of God's mercy and grace; by turning from the evil of their ways and bringing forth the fruits of newneſs of life. This, and this only, is the chriſtian ſalvation. And this is the only way which Chriſt propos'd to ſave ſinners in. And tho' almoſt every ſect of chriſtians have ſet up ſomething elſe; which they call the *way to ſalvation*; and tho' each party contends with much heat and zeal for their particular ſcheme, and inſiſts upon it, that *that chriſtianity*; yet this cannot, with any colour of juſtice, be urg'd by the Unbelievers, in *prejudice* of the *chriſtian religion*; becauſe, upon a fair enquiry, it will appear not to belong to it. With regard to any ſcience, the caſe is the ſame. If its profeſſors make any blunders, lay down falſe principles, or draw unjuſt concluſions; theſe are not urg'd, in prejudice of the ſcience itſelf, but are charg'd only upon their ſeveral *parents*, as in juſtice they ought to be. And, ſurely, in argument, the ſame equity and fairneſs ought to be uſed and allow'd, with regard to *chriſtianity*, as is uſed and allow'd to all ſciences whatever. And, therefore, the *Scepticks* and *Unbelievers*, if they at any time oppoſe chriſtianity, by way of argument, ought not

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to blend with it the *doctrines*, and *principles*, and *fancies* of *men*, and argue againſt theſe, as againſt chriſtianity; which unfair practiſing will not be admitted in any other caſe. Let them take chriſtianity in its native ſimplicity, free from all *human mixtures* and *additions*; and then let them find out any *abſurdity* or *unreaſonableneſs*, if they can. I have before ſhewn, what is the chriſtian ſalvation, or the way which Chriſt propos'd to ſave men in. And as this is the only proper expedient, which could be effectual to that end; ſo it is highly juſt and reaſonable. I ſhall not here make myſelf anſwerable for every expreſſion or mode of ſpeech, which may be urg'd from the *New Teſtament*, in the preſent caſe; but this I do inſiſt upon, that the *chriſtian ſalvation*, or the way which Chriſt propos'd to ſave men in, is *ſtrickly juſt* and *rational*, ſuitable to the *nature of God*, and the *nature of man*; and, therefore, it is highly worthy of *all acceptation*. Again,

Fourthly and *laſtly*, I obſerve, tho' a *heated paſſion*, or an *indulged appetite*, or the like, may miſlead the underſtandings of men, by which they are drawn into a *wrong judgment* of perſons and things; and that tho' by *fawning* and *flattery*, and by many other practices, we work upon the *weakneſs* and *vanity* of each other by which means we gain our ſeveral ends; yet this cannot be the caſe, with reſpect to *God*; for as his underſtanding cannot poſſibly be *miſled*, ſo there is nothing but the *love* and *practice* of *virtue* and *true goodneſs*, which can poſſibly render us worthy of his regard.

Let me, then, by way of concluſion, deſire and intreat, that each and every of us, in our ſeveral places and callings, may ſo deport ourſelves, as that we may be *The glory of Chriſt* in this life, and, after it, may be found *worthy* to enter into the joy of our Lord.

TRACT XXX.

A

LETTER of THANKS

TO

The *Author* of the Tract, entitled, *A Friendly Admonition to Mr.* Chubb; wherein the ſeveral Things complained of, in that Admonition, are conſidered.

SIR,

I Have read the *Admonition*; and tho' I do not think your *complaints* well grounded, yet preſuming that they are the produce of *kindneſs*, and intended for *mine* and the *publick* good, therefore, I return you my hearty thanks. Your good wiſhes are the ſame, and, therefore, my obligations to you muſt be the ſame alſo, whether your opinion and repreſentation of my writings are *juſt*, or *not*. And tho' I have hitherto determin'd not to take notice of any *nameleſs tract*, becauſe, I think, it is dealing with an adverſary upon an *unequal foot*; and tho' I intend to abide by this reſolution, for the time to come, unleſs ſomething extraordinary ſhall diſpoſe me to the contrary, yet I have thought proper, upon this occaſion, to trouble you with a *Letter*, becauſe I am willing to write a few words upon thoſe points which are the *grounds* of your complaints againſt me.

The general charge is, how little *honour*, how little *ſervice* I have done to the *chriſtian religion*. And this *negative* charge is, in the general, ſupported

ported by complaints of the ſame kind, *viz.* that I have aſcribed *too little* to *faith*, to *goſpel-ordinances*, &c. with reſpect to the obtaining *God's favour*. And here, if I may be allowed to follow the example of my admoniſher, I may likewiſe take up *my complaint* againſt him, and ſay, that he has been too *ſparing* in this particular, by omitting to complain againſt another *perſon*, who ſtands equally chargeably with what I am complained of for; one who ſays not a word of faith, or goſpel-ordinances, *&c.* when he was *profeſſedly* treating of the *grounds* of divine favour, or diſpleaſure; one whoſe ſayings are likely to do much more *damage*, if any can ariſe from ſuch a procedure, than any ſayings of mine can be ſuppoſed to do. *Matt.* xxv. 31. to the end of the chapter. *When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory. And before him ſhall be gathered all nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats. And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay unto them, on his right-hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in. Naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirſty, and gave thee drink? When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took thee in? or naked, and cloathed thee? Or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in priſon, and came unto thee? And the King ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them, verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then ſhall he*

ſay alſo unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or athirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and not miniſter unto thee? Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying, Verily, I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me. And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life eternal. The words I have here cited are a diſcourſe of our Saviour's, in which he gives an account of the *laſt judgment*, of the grounds of divine favour, or diſpleaſure, and of the *righteous ſentences* which will be pronounced upon men, according as they have rendered themſelves the ſuitable and proper objects of *reward*, or *puniſhment*. And this diſcourſe, ſurely, affords a large ſubject for my admoniſher to have exerciſed his *complaining talent* upon. He might, *firſt*, have obſerved the *perſonal character* of him that ſpake, *viz.* that he was conſtituted to be a *light* to the *world*, or a ſure guide to eternal happineſs; by repreſenting to, and preſſing upon men whatever was *abſolutely neceſſary*, and would effectually *ſecure* to them the love and favour of God. *Secondly*, My admoniſher might have obſerved what the *ſubject* was, which the ſpeaker *profeſſedly* undertook to treat of, *viz.* the *laſt judgment*, the *grounds* upon which the Judge will act, and the *ſentence* which he will paſs upon all men accordingly. And, from hence, he might have argued, in his own way, that for *ſuch a perſon*, upon *ſuch an occaſion*, to take no notice of faith, or goſpel-ordinances, of his own merits, and the like, and to declare plain virtue, humanity,

manity, and charity the *ground* of God's favour, and the want of theſe the ground of his *diſpleaſure*, muſt be *prodigious neglect* indeed; a neglect, that is not very *honourable*, very *ſerviceable*, or rather, which is *diſhonourable* and *diſſerviceable* to the *chriſtian religion*, and, therefore, ought to be *complained* of. Now, for my admoniſher to paſs it over in ſilence, when, if any miſchief could ariſe to mankind from a diſcourſe of this kind, this, ſurely, muſt be more *injurious* than any writings of mine can poſſibly be; and to ſingle out me, to lodge his complaints againſt, I think, is an inſtance of *partiality*, or at leaſt a manifeſt *neglect* in my admoniſher. But to return.

The *faults* or *errors* complained of are of *two* kinds, viz. *exceſs* and *defect*. Thoſe of exceſs are, that I aſcribe *too much* to *reaſon*, or the natural capacities of men, to know and do their duty; and *too much* to *virtue*, *humanity*, and *charity*, in rendering men acceptable and well-pleaſing to God. The *errors*, or *faults* of *defect*, are conſequences drawn from the forementioned exceſſes, *namely*, that I aſcribe *too little* to *revelation*, and to *divine aſſiſtance*, in the knowledge and practice of our duty, and *too little* to *faith*, to *goſpel-ordinances*, and to the *ſufferings and death of Chriſt*, with regard to God's favour and the divine acceptance. Theſe, I think, are the ſum of what is charged upon me; and, in ſpeaking to each of theſe, I think, I ſhall conſider all that my admoniſher has complained of. And,

Firſt, A *fault*, or *error* of *exceſs*, which is charged upon me, is, that I aſcribe *too much* to *reaſon*, or the natural capacities of men, to know and do their duty. Here I ſhall take for granted, as being elſewhere proved, the following propoſition, viz. *that God is abſolutely wiſe and good.* This being admitted, it will follow, that God will not

require or *expect* the performance of any thing, as *duty*, from any creature, but what is *proper* for him to require of ſuch a creature, and what is fit for *that creature* to perform, conſidering his abilities, his condition, and circumſtances in life. I ſay, this will unavoidably follow, if the forementioned propoſition be admitted; becauſe to act otherwiſe is *abſolutely inconſiſtent* with that character; that is, if God ſhould require any thing, as *duty*, from a creature, which was *unfit* for him to require, or the *creature* to perform, conſidering his abilities, circumſtances, and condition in life; this would be *ſevere*, *arbitrary*, and *unkind*, and, conſequently, be abſolutely inconſiſtent with *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*. Now, if this be the *truth* of the caſe, which, I imagine, my admoniſher, notwithſtanding all his complaints, will not venture to *deny*, then, it will follow that nothing can be a man's duty, but what comes within the reach of his *intellectual* faculty to diſcover, and his *active* faculty to perform. Whether we conſider him *ſtanding*, or *fallen*, it alters not the caſe; becauſe, as his abilities, his circumſtances, or condition in life change, ſo his *duty changes* with them. And, therefore, if there be any change in the natural abilities of man by the *fall* of *Adam*, then, a *change* of his *duty* will unavoidably follow; becauſe, as I obſerved above, nothing in the nature and reaſon of the thing, with my admoniſher's leave, can be a man's duty, but what comes within the reach of his intellectual faculty to diſcover, and his active faculty to perform; every thing elſe being *unreaſonable* and *unjuſt*, when it is conſidered as his *duty*.

If it ſhould be ſaid that *Adam* fell from a ſtate of *innocence* into a ſtate of *apoſtacy*, and that this fall muſt make a conſiderable *change* of his abilities: I *anſwer*, If this be admitted, then, it will follow that, as his abilities *decreaſed*, his *duty de-*

creaſed

creaſed in proportion. But how does it appear that his abilities muſt ſuffer ſuch a change by the loſs of his innocence? Man, like all other creatures, muſt be innocent, when called into being, ſince 'tis abſurd to ſuppoſe that any creature can be a criminal, *antecedent* to its *exiſtence*, or that it ſhould become a criminal by its *beginning* to *be*; becauſe exiſtence to every creature is the effect of the power and will of *another*. And as man was made an innocent creature, which was the caſe of *ſtones* and *trees*, which were equally free from fault as well as man; ſo he was likewiſe made a *moral agent*, which rendered him *capable* of becoming a criminal, by being in a capacity of acting *agreeably* or *contrary* to that *rule* of action, by which he ought to conduct his behaviour. Man *tranſgreſſed* that rule, and loſt his innocence; but what has this to do with his *abilities?* His intellectual and active faculties were not *deſtroyed* by his tranſgreſſion, but continued the ſame *after* his fall, as *before it*. Man, it is true, was, from his make and conſtitution, liable to *abuſe* his faculties; but it will not follow from thence, that by his tranſgreſſion he would *loſe* the *uſe* of *them*; the contrary to which is true, becauſe we all experience in ourſelves thoſe faculties of intelligence and activity, which *Adam* was created with; which faculties, as they were placed in us by our Creator to *diſcover* to us our *duty*, and to render us *capable* of *performing it*, ſo, if rightly uſed and attended to, they are *ſufficient* for that purpoſe; and to ſuppoſe the contrary is to charge God *fooliſhly*, by repreſenting him, as providing means not ſufficient to reach the end they are directed to. And as man is thus naturally qualified to *know* and *do* his duty, ſo he may do it with *eaſe* and *certainty*. Duty, ſurely, is not ſuch a *ſtrange*, *myſterious*, *out of the way thing*, as ſome would repreſent it to be,

neither

neither is God ſuch an *unkind* and *ungenerous* Governour, as to lay a *trap* for his creatures, by making that their duty which is *exceeding difficult* to be known, and which they are in very great *danger* not to come at the knowledge of; much leſs will he make that their duty which is *above* their ability to diſcover or perform, for, then, he muſt be a *hard* and *cruel Maſter*, indeed. And, here, I would beg my *admoniſher* to conſider what a compliment he is paying to his kind Creator, by repreſenting, or inſinuating, at leaſt, that he makes man's duty ſo *myſterious* and *great*, as that it is *exceeding difficult*, yea, *above* his ability, to know, or do. This, ſurely, reflects diſhonour upon God's *moral character*, becauſe ſuch a conduct is *unworthy* of a wiſe and good being. Thus, I have ſhewn what I aſcribe to man, *viz.* an ability to *know* and *do* his duty. And this, I think, is not *too much*, becauſe it is not only what *he is*, but what, in reaſon, *he ought* to be poſſeſſed of; for, if he had any thing leſs than this, he would have *too little*; too little for God's *honour* and his own *ſafety*, or rather too little to render him an *accountable creature*, becauſe he ought not, in reaſon, to be accountable for thoſe things which are *above* his ability to know, or do. And, from the forementioned error or fault of exceſs, I am,

Secondly, By way of conſequence, charged with *two errors* or *faults* of *defect*, *viz.* that I aſcribe *too little divine revelation*, with reſpect to the knowledge of our duty; and *too little* to *divine aſſiſtance*, with reſpect to the practice of it. As to divine revelation, I obſerve, that tho' man's intellectual faculty qualifies him to diſcover and know his duty, yet he is *liable* to *neglect* or *lay aſide* the uſe of it, and to commit himſelf to other *guides* to direct him, in matters of religion; and this renders him very *liable* to be *miſled*. And as mankind are, thus, liable to lay

aſide

aſide the uſe of their reaſon, ſo this was manifeſtly the caſe, in fact. The *Pagan world* were ſo far from *uſing*, and *following* their *reaſon*, in matters of religion, that, on the contrary, they acted *againſt it*, being under the direction of *oracles*, and *prieſts*, and men who pretended to have *communication* with the *gods*; ſo that their *barbarous*, *ſtupid*, and *burdenſome religion* was ſo far from being the *reſult* of reaſon, or of the *defects* of it; that it was introduced by men's *laying aſide* their reaſon in matters of religion, and ſubſtituting *pretended revelations* in its ſtead. And as this was the caſe, with reſpect to the *Pagan world*, ſo, ſurely, it was an inſtance of *divine kindneſs*, and exceeding uſeful and advantageous to mankind, for *God* to give them a *revelation*, whereby to deliver them from the *bondage* and *corruption* of all pretended revelations, and to reſtore them to their *manly liberty*, by reducing them to the right uſe and exerciſe of their reaſon in matters of religion. And this was plainly the caſe of the *chriſtian revelation*, the uſe of which was not ſo much to ſuperſede or ſupply the defects of our natural faculties, as to call us back to a *right uſe* of them, by laying before us a rule of action, which was our duty, independent of, and antecedent to that revelation, and which our reaſon *approves* and *juſtifies*; by preſcribing a *mode* of *worſhip* free from that load of abominable ſuperſtitions, which was very *injurious* to the Pagan world; and by repreſenting to us the certain *conſequences* of a good or bad life, with reſpect to divine favour, or diſpleaſure; thereby to engage our *paſſions*, our deſires, our hopes and fears in the *intereſt* of *religion*. This, I think is the ſtate of the caſe, with reſpect to the chriſtian revelation; the giving of which, as it is a very great inſtance of God's kindneſs and good-will to mankind, ſo it is highly uſeful and beneficial to them. Thus, have I ſhewn what I aſcribe to *revelation*; and, I think, I have not aſcribed *too little*,

tle, becauſe, if I ſhould aſcribe more, it might be *too much*: too much for the *honour* of God, and for the *comfort* and *ſafety* of mankind. For if revelation is ſo *abſolutely neceſſary*, as that man's duty cannot be diſcover'd without it, then, ſurely, far the *greateſt* part of mankind muſt be in a *deplorable condition*, indeed. The chriſtian revelation was not given, till a *multitude* of *ages* were *paſt*: and, ſince it has been given, it has been far from *prevailing all over the world*. And, therefore if *man*, by his condition in nature upon the fall of *Adam*, was *unqualified* to know, and, conſequently, to do his duty, then, the multitudes of mankind, who have been *deſtitue of revelation*, muſt be wholly *unaccountable*, ſo far as their incapacity extends, or elſe they muſt be in a *damnable ſtate*, beyond all poſſibility of relief, for any thing we can *ſee* to the contrary. For tho' man be conſidered as under a *natural incapacity*, yet, I take it, he is not ſuppos'd to be *free* from *guilt* on that account, upon my *admoniſher*'s principles, and, therefore, he lies open to the heavy diſpleaſure of Almighty God. But this is a doctrine as *abſurd* in itſelf, as *diſhonourable* to God, and as *uncomfortable* to mankind, as the doctrine of *abſolute election* and *reprobation*: it being equally the ſame to a man, whether his *damnation* be the effect of an *abſolute decree*, or of his *helpleſs condition in nature*, which it was not in his power to prevent, or deliver himſelf from. And this I would particularly recommend to the conſideration of my *admoniſher*; becauſe, I am perſuaded, he would not caſt ſuch *diſhonour* upon his *kind Creator*, if he ſaw what his principles, in the iſſue, would *unavoidably* lead to. And tho' he may poſſibly think to preſs me hard upon this head, by urging quotations out of the writings of Mr. *Locke* and Dr. *Clarke*, for whom, he may well ſuppoſe, I have the *higheſt veneration*; yet, if it be expected I

ſhould

ſhould ſubmit my judgment to their *authority*, in this I beg leave to be *excuſed*. And, if thoſe gentlemen have urged the *neceſſity* of a revelation, from the *inſufficiency* of men's natural faculties to diſcover their duty, I muſt take the liberty to *diſſent* from them, upon the *grounds* I have before laid down. As to the ſtate of the *Pagan world*, this, I think, is plainly againſt them becauſe the cauſe of the *Pagans* miſcarriages, in matters of *religion*, was not the inſufficiency of reaſon, but it was their *neglecting* and laying that *aſide*, and giving themſelves up to be conducted by *prieſts*, and *oracles*, and *pretended revelations*. Again,

Thirdly, The other *error* or *fault* of *defect*, ſuppoſed to follow, by conſequence, from the fore mentioned error or fault of exceſs, is, that I aſcribe *too little* to *divine aſſiſtance*, with reſpect to the practice of our duty. What I have ſaid of this matter is moſtly contained in my Examination of Mr. *Barclay*'s Principles, and in my Reply to Mr. *Beaven*'s Defence of him; wherein I have allowed "that God may ſometimes kindly interpoſe, and "by a ſupernatural operation, bring to men's "view ſuch uſeful truths, as they, thro' ſloth, "bigotry, or ſome other impediment, are ignorant "of, or do not attend to: and likewiſe that God "may, by thoſe operations, preſent ſuch motives "to men's minds as are neceſſary to excite to good "actions, ſtill leaving them perfectly at liberty "as moral agents, whether they will hearken to "and follow, or reject thoſe wholeſome councels "as he, by ſuch ſupernatural operations, or by "the written word, is pleaſed to lay before them." Page 4 of my Reply to Mr. *Beaven*. Thus far I have *allowed*; but this my *admoniſher* complains of as *too little*: tho', I think, he is *miſtaken*, becauſe, if I had allowed more, it would have been *too much*; too much for man to remain a *moral agent*,

or

or an *accountable* creature, or a proper object of *reward*, or *punishment*; seeing more than I have allowed above would have been inconsistent with *human liberty*. Every action in which man is properly a moral agent, for which he is accountable, and which renders him the proper object of reward or punishment, must, in the nature of the thing be the *effect* and *produce* of *man's will* and *agency*, and not of the will and agency of another. And, therefore, if more were ascribed to the *influence* of the *Spirit*, with respect to the performance of man's *duty*, than I have allowed above, it would be *too much*.

But, here, my admoniſher returns upon me by obſerving, that I aſcribe nothing to the Spirit, with reſpect to the *heart* and *affections* of men, which he looks upon to be the *main point*. By the heart and affections I underſtand the *ſame thing*; for if my *admoniſher* means otherwiſe, then, I do not underſtand him. However, I ſhall conſider the heart and affections as the ſame, the affections being ſuppoſed to be *ſeated in*, or to *ſpring from* that part of man's body, which is called the *heart*. The affections are to be conſider'd, as *parts* and *branches* of the human compoſition, or as ſomething which *flows* from it: and theſe are called into *exerciſe*, or into *being*, by *objects* from without, which are differently, and at different times, preſented to the mind. And each affection is *ſtronger* or *weaker* from ſomething different in the compoſition and conſtitution of each creature.

Thus, *love* and *hatred*, *hope* and *fear*, *joy* and *ſorrow*, and the like, are either called into exerciſe, or into being, by objects from without, which either *ſtrike* and *awaken* thoſe affections, or elſe give being to them. And each of theſe affections is ſtronger, or weaker, according to the *conſtitution* of each creature, or as they have been check'd or indulg'd by that creature. One affection may likewiſe

likewiſe take place of, and *ſupplant* another oppoſite to it; thus, the ſame object which appears *agreeable* to day, and ſo excites the affection of *love* may to morrow, when taken in a different view, appear *diſagreeable*, and excite the contrary affection, *viz. hatred*. And as the affections are excited by objects from without, ſo theſe objects are preſented to the mind different ways, *viz.* by the *ſenſes* by man's own *reflections*, by another *agent*, or the like. Thus, I may repreſent to a man the *evil* he will draw upon himſelf by the performance of this or that action; and this may awaken his *fear*, and be a *check* or *reſtraint* upon him, with regard to the performance of that action. And, in ſuch a caſe, I may, in a *ſecondary* and *leſs proper* ſenſe, be ſaid to *influence* the man's heart and affections, and to work a *change* in him, when, in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, I an no more than barely an *inſtrument*, in bringing thoſe ideas or objects to his view, which, by his conſidering and reflecting upon them, were the *ground* and reaſon of his change. And, here, my reader will eaſily diſcern *how far* I allow the Spirit of God may work upon the hearts and affections of men, *viz.* by bringing to their *view* ſuch objects as are proper to *excite* their *affections*, ſtill leaving them as much at *liberty* to attend to, or reject what is thus offered. as they are, when thoſe objects are preſented to the mind any other *way*, or by any *other* agent or inſtrument. And, here, I conceive I do not aſcribe *too little* to the ſpirit of God, with reſpect to the performance of man's duty, becauſe, if I aſcribe more, it will be *too much*. For if God ſhould ſo far interpoſe, as to *raiſe* or *change* the affections of men, *abſtractedly* from any *objects* from without, tho' this ſuppoſition is an *abſurdity*, becauſe every affection ſuppoſes ſome object which it is exerciſed upon, and ſuppoſe ſuch affections are the *ſprings* of action in man, then, man is a mere

mere *machine*; he loves, and desires, and acts *he knows not what, nor why*; or rather, he does not love, nor desire, nor act *at all*, but some other agent loves, and desires, and acts *in him*. And, consequently, man is *not* a moral agent, is *not* accountable, is *not* a proper object of reward, or punishment, at least, in all those cases in which the Spirit of God *interposes*, as aforesaid. Besides, if the hearts and affections of men, by their *condition*, in *nature* are *evil*, which evil it was not in their power to *prevent*, nor to *free themselves* from; and if this evil exposes them to the *displeasure* of Almighty God, then, the case is the same to mankind, as if their *state* had been determined by an *absolute decree*. For as every man, from his condition in nature, must of course, be a *bad man*, except *God interposes* and changes his heart and affections; so every man, that is *bad*, would *become good*, if God would interpose and *change* his *heart*, as aforesaid. *Goodness* or *badness* in men, upon this principle, is not a matter of *choice* or *election* in them; but one man is bad *by* or *from* his condition in nature, and another is good *by God's interposing* and changing his heart and affections. But this *doctrine* reflects *great dishonour* upon our kind Creator, and, therefore surely, is not the truth of the case. Again,

Fourthly, My other *error* or *fault* of *excess* is, that I ascribe *too much* to *virtue*, *humanity* and *charity*, with respect to God's favour and acceptance. And here, again, I shall take for granted the proposition I mentioned above, *viz. that God is absolutely wise and good*. This being allowed, it will follow, that he will not *love* nor *hate*, *reward* nor *punish* any person, upon any other account than his being the suitable and proper object of his *approbation*, or *aversion*; because to love or hate, reward or punish, upon any other *motive*,

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is wrong in it ſelf, and is the effect of *weakneſs*, or *viciouſneſs*, and therefore, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with the character of the divine Being. The queſtion, then, is, what is it that makes a man a *lovely creature*, and thereby renders him a proper object of *divine regard*? And this, I ſay, is virtue, humanity, and charity; or, in other words, it is the putting on *ſuch* a temper of mind and *ſuch* a behaviour, as *becomes* us as *men*, which renders us *worthy* of the favour of God. Man is a dependent creature, who owes himſelf and all his enjoyments to the *benevolence* of his kind Creator, to whom he cannot poſſibly make any grateful return of kindneſs again; ſo that the ſome of his duty to God is *love* and *thankfulneſs*, and this includes in it his duty to his neighbour, which is the *fulfilling of the law*; ſeeing true love and thankfulneſs to God conſiſts in having a juſt ſence of his *goodneſs* upon our minds, and in carefully uſing the *benefits* he beſtow on us, to anſwer the *wiſe* and *good end* for which they were given, *viz.* the *common good*. The *common felicity*, and therein the *honour* and *glory of God*, is the *grand deſign* of the preſent ſyſtem of things, and the great end which our kind Creator had in view, in calling this world into being. And as man was deſigned and conſtituted to be a *ſharer* in, and a *contributer* to the common tranquility; ſo when he has ſuch a *juſt ſenſe* of his Creator's goodneſs, as becomes a *principle of action* in him, and diſpoſes him carefully to uſe the *benefits* he receives, in anſwering the wiſe and kind purpoſe of the *benefactor*, by contributing to the well-being of the reſt of his fellow-creatures, and by introducing as much *happineſs* into the creation as he can; this is true *love*, true *thankfulneſs*, and is what will render him truly *lovely* and *valuable* in the ſight of God. For tho' every virtuous good man ought, and will be ready,

on all proper occaſions, *publickly* to acknowledge the benefits he receives, to the *praiſe* of the *donor*; yet theſe acknowledgments are not love or gratitude, but only the *outward marks* and *ſigns* of them, and which too often are ſeperated from them. Theſe acknowledgments, theſe *calves of our lips*, are no more than an *outward profeſſion* of love and thankfulneſs, or, at moſt, the lower kind of *fruits* of them. By theſe acknowledgments we tell *Almighty God*, or rather *tell one another*, that we are loving and thankful. But theſe, conſidered *abſtractedly*, are far from being love or thankfulneſs itſelf, becauſe the *contrary* may take place in us, notwithſtanding thoſe profeſſions. And, therefore, when a man has *ſuch a ſence* of his Creator's goodneſs upon his mind, as engages him to employ the benefits he receives, to anſwer the wiſe and good end for which they were given; this is true love and gratitude, and will render a man a thouſand-fold more *valuable* in himſelf, and more acceptable to God, than all the moſt pompous numerous compliments which he can poſſibly pay to him. As to *prayer*, whether we conſider it, as a ſolemn addreſs to God for the good things we want, or for the continuance of thoſe we already enjoy, whether, for the removing the evils we ſuffer, or for the preventing thoſe we fear; in all thoſe views, it is, ſtrictly and properly, a *duty* we owe to *ourſelves*, like as it is our duty to labour for our daily bread, and to uſe all proper means to procure the great end of being to ourſelves, *viz.* our *preſent* and *future happineſs*. And, therefore, as far as prayer is *ſubſervient* to render us the proper objects of divine regard, by rendering us *worthy* of the benefits we pray for, and is a *means* to the obtaining of them; ſo far it is a *benefit* to us, and may, in a ſecondary and leſs proper ſenſe, be ſaid to render us *acceptable* to God;

I ſay, it *may* render us acceptable to God, not upon its own account, conſidered abſtractedly, as prayer, but as it is a means to produce in us ſuch a *temper* and *conduct*, as renders us truly lovely and valuable in the eyes of our Maker. Thus, I have ſhewn what I aſcribe to *virtue*, *humanity*, and *charity*; and, I think, I did not aſcribe *too much*, becauſe, if I had aſcribed leſs, it would have been *too little*; too little for God's *honour*, for if he does not *love* and *accept* the virtuous human charitable man, he cannot be a *wiſe* and a *good* being. Again,

Fifthly, One of the *faults* or *errors* of *defect* which I am charged with, and which is urged, by way of conſequence, from the foregoing error or fault of exceſs, is, that I aſcribe *too little* to *faith*. By *faith* I ſuppoſe my admoniſher muſt mean an aſſent to this general propoſition, *viz. that the chriſtian revelation is of a divine original*; or elſe ſome particular propoſition or propoſitions contained under that general, ſuch as, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, and the like. Upon which I obſerve, that *aſſent*, as it is ſimply an act or judgment of the mind ariſing from proper evidence, is the ſame, and renders a man equally valuable in *all caſes*; becauſe the *ground* of aſſent is not the goodneſs or badneſs, or the greater or leſs importance of the ſubject to which the propoſition aſſented to relates, but only the *ſtrength* of the evidence upon which the *truth* of the propoſition depends, or is ſuppoſed to depend. But tho' aſſent, in all caſes, is the ſame; yet the *truths* or propoſitions aſſented to may be very different, and of much greater concern to *mankind* in one caſe than in another. *That the whole is equal to all its parts* is a propoſition of very little concern to mankind; but, that *good men* will be *happy*, and *bad men miſerable* in *another world*, are propoſitions, the truth of which nearly concerns us all; becauſe it lies upon us to

take all proper *meaſures* to guard againſt the one, and to *ſecure* the other, that is, to become *good men*; ſeeing it is goodneſs which entitles us to the one, and ſecures us from the other. Now, ſo far as any revelation or any propoſitions contain'd in it are *ſubſervient* to *goodneſs*, and do really diſpoſe us to it; ſo far *faith* in theſe propoſitions is *ſerviceable* to us, and, may tho' in an improper ſenſe, be ſaid to render us *acceptable* to God, not upon the account of any *intrinſick worth* or value in faith itſelf, conſidered as faith or an act of aſſent, but as it has been *ſubſervient* to goodneſs; which goodneſs alone, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is what renders us acceptable to our Maker; becauſe a good man will be equally *valuable* in himſelf, and *acceptable* to God, whether faith be introductive to his goodneſs, or not; juſt as *health* will be equally valuable, whether it be procured or preſerved by this or that means. And, therefore, as it is *right* to render to faith its due; ſo, ſurely, it muſt be *wrong* to render to it more than its due. If the *belief* of a judgment to come has an influence upon my *temper* and *actions*, and changes them for the better, faith is *inſtrumentally* a benefit to me; but if faith has no ſuch influence, which influence depends upon my own will, then, it is of no advantage to me at all. And, in this caſe, if I am influenced and wrought upon, it is not faith, ſtrictly ſpeaking, but the *object of faith*, or the propoſition or truth aſſented to, which is the *ground* and reaſon of my change; and it is the *change itſelf*, and not the way and means by which it is brought about, that renders me *acceptable* to God. Thus, I have ſhewn what I aſcribe to *faith*; and, I think, I have not aſcribed *too little*, becauſe, if I had aſcribed more, it would have been *too much*, as being more than it has a *title* to, or than the *ſcriptures* aſcribe to it. For

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tho' faith is ſpoken of there with great *applauſe*, yet this was not, on the account of any *intrinſick worth* or value in the thing itſelf, but of that *virtue* and *goodneſs* which it was *highly ſubſervient* to. The *Bible*, when it ſpeaks of and conſiders faith, *abſtractedly* from that influence which it ſometimes has upon men's actions, pronounces it perfect *emptineſs* or *nothing*. Thus, St. *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2. *Tho' I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing*. And, here, I think, it may be juſtly preſumed, that the faith of St. *Paul* was truly *orthodox*, and ſufficiently *ſtrong*, as being founded upon clear and convincing evidence; and yet St. *Paul* declares, that his *ſtrong orthodox faith*, when conſidered abſtractedly, was *nothing*; that is, it would not be of any ſervice to him, with reſpect to the obtaining God's favour. Now, ſuppoſing the Apoſtle's words, in the text above, ſhould be tranſpoſed, and be read thus, *And tho' I have all charity, and have no faith, I am nothing*; this, I think, would expreſs my admoniſher's principles. But, ſurely, it is not the *truth* of the caſe; for as charity is truly *valuable* in itſelf, ſo it diſpoſes *Almighty God*, to *cover* or *overlook* a multitude of ſuch *faults*, or rather *defects*, as the want of faith, at moſt, can reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be. Again,

Sixthly, Another *error* or *fault* of *defect* charged upon me, and which is ſuppoſed to follow, by way conſequence, from the laſt mentioned error of exceſs, is, that I aſcribe *too little* to goſpel-ordinances. And, here, I obſerve, that as experience abundantly ſhews mankind to be *much diſpoſed* to ceremonies and external obſervances, there being ſomething *pompious* in them which ſtrikes and affects our ſenſes; ſo in the *chriſtian revelation* there is proviſion of this kind, by the appointment of a *few ceremonies* or inſtitutions, which are *plain* and

ſimple in themſelves, the *leaſt burthenſome*, and the *moſt inſtructive* to us; and theſe are preſcribed, not as *taxes* upon mankind, but to diſpoſe them to *virtue* and *goodneſs* in the uſe of them, and to prevent their running into *burdenſome* and *hurtful ſuperſtitions*; and, as far as they are *ſubſervient* to theſe ends, ſo far they are *uſeful* and valuable to us, and, in an improper ſenſe, may be ſaid to render us *acceptable* to God, as they are ſubſervient to that *virtue* and *goodneſs* which, in truth and reality, does ſo. And as every good man ought to attend on thoſe, as means to *ſtrengthen* and *eſtabliſh* himſelf in virtue and goodneſs, and to preſerve *decency* and *order* in the chriſtian church; ſo, on the other ſide, he ought not to make the uſe of theſe the *ground* of his confidence in *God's favour*, becauſe it is not the uſe of them, conſidered abſtractedly, but it is that *virtue* and *goodneſs*, to which theſe are ſubſervient, that renders him acceptable to his Maker. Thus, I have ſhewn what I aſcribe to *goſpel-ordinances*; and herein, I think, I have not aſcribed *too little*, becauſe, if I had aſcribed more, it would have been *too much*; by raiſing the value of theſe above their *worth*. and above the value which the *goſpel* ſets upon them. Thus, *Gal.* v. 6. *In Jeſus Chriſt neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion availeth any thing, but faith, which worketh by*, or is productive of, *love*. Rom. ii. 25. *For circumciſion verily profiteth if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion.* Which is as much as if the Apoſtle had ſaid; thou, being a *Jew*, valueſt thyſelf upon thy being *circumciſed*; and, verily, whilſt thy circumciſion is an *argument* to thee to *keep* the *law*, and leads thee to the practice of thy *duty*, ſo far and in that reſpect, it is *profitable* to thee; but if a *ſenſe* of thy being *circumciſed* has no ſuch effect or influence upon thee, and thou, notwithſtanding,

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do'ſt *tranſgreſs* the *law*, then, it is the ſame to thee as if thou had'ſt not been circumciſed. Thy being circumciſed, conſidered *abſtractedly* from the *influence* it might and ought to have upon thy actions, is of no value. And as this is the caſe, with reſpect to circumciſion, which is allowed to be an ordinance of *divine inſtitution*; ſo the caſe is the ſame, with reſpect to all other *inſtitutions*. For as they are directed to ſome *good end*, ſo they are no farther valuable than as the *means* to that end; and no man is valuable for their ſakes, but for the ſake of that *goodneſs* which they are introductive to. Again,

Seventhly, and *laſtly*, The other *error* or *fault* of *defect* charged upon me, and which is likewiſe ſuppoſed to follow from the above *error* or *fault* of exceſs, is, that I aſcribe *too little* to the *death and ſufferings of Chriſt*. Upon which I obſerve, that as Chriſt came on purpoſe to promote and ſet forward the *ſalvation of mankind*; ſo it was fit and proper that he ſhould *do* and *ſuffer* whatever was neceſſary for the attainment of that valuable end. And as the laying down his life willingly and chearfully, in this cauſe, was the *ſtrongeſt proof* he could give that he was not an *impoſter*, but was in earneſt in what he pretended to; ſo it was proper that he ſhould lay down his life, when called to it, and thereby give this *convincing evidence* of the *truth* and *importance* of that *teſtimony* which he then delivered to the world. And as he propoſed to mankind the breaking off their ſins by repentance, and returning to the love and practice of virtue and goodneſs, as the *only expedient* to reſtore them to *divine favour*; ſo his yielding up his preſent eaſe, pleaſure, and profit, yea, and life itſelf, when it became ſubſervient to the publick good, *which was his caſe*, was the moſt *lively* and *powerful example* and *pattern* of that *virtue* and *goodneſs*

which he recommended to, and preſſed upon mankind. And as a ſenſe of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt, when conſider'd in *both thoſe views*, has a *tendency* to lead us to the love and practice of virtue and goodneſs; ſo when we are *wrought upon* by it, then, theſe may truly be ſaid to be the *means* of our ſalvation; and we may, in an improper or figurative ſenſe, according to the language of the *ſcripture*, be ſaid to be *ſaved by them*; tho' ſtrictly and properly, in this caſe, it is a man's virtue and goodneſs, which the ſufferings and death of Chriſt may highly tend to promote, which is the *ground* of God's favour to him. Thus, I have ſhewed what I aſcribe to the *ſufferings and death of Chriſt*; and, I think, I have not aſcribed *too little*, becauſe, if I had aſcribed more, it would have been *too much*; too much for God's *honour*, and more than the *truth* of the caſe will admit. For as the life, and ſufferings, and death of one perſon, when conſidered *abſtractedly*, cannot poſſibly render another perſon more or leſs *valuable* or *diſagreeable*; ſo God will *love* or *hate*, *reward* or *puniſh* every man for what is *perſonally lovely* or *hateful in him*, and not for what is lovely or hateful in the perſon of another.

I am very ſenſible that the *ground* of *divine acceptance* is a point of the utmoſt concern to *mankind*, and that it ought to be handled with the greateſt *caution* and *exactneſs*. And, therefore, as, on the *one ſide*, nothing ought to be *ſuppreſſed* which is *abſolute neceſſary*, and which, for its *own ſake*, renders men truly acceptable and well-pleaſing to God; ſo on the *other ſide*, nothing ought to be *added* to, or made the *grounds* of divine acceptance, but what in truth and reality, does upon its *own account*, and for its *own ſake*, render men the ſuitable and proper objects of divine regard: becauſe every thing ſhort of this is, at moſt, but *means* and *helps*

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to that which is the ground of divine acceptance, and not the thing itſelf, and, therefore, ought never to be conſidered as ſuch. Beſides, the making thoſe things the grounds of divine acceptance, which, in truth, are no more than means or helps to it, is of the moſt *dangerous conſequence* to mankind; becauſe this is to *ſew pillows to all arm-holes*, and to lay a *falſe* foundation for *hope* and *comfort*, which vicious men are too apt to lay hold of. And this has been the caſe, in fact, with reſpect to thoſe *very things*, which my admoniſher has complained of. A multitude of *Chriſtians*, who, tho' they have nothing valuable in themſelves, to render them acceptable to God, yet think they can raiſe, from the abovemention'd *points*, ſome *ſolid grounds* of *comforts* to reſt their *ſouls* upon. Thus,

Some men think they experience in themſelves a *ſtrong orthodox faith*, which they judge to be not only a *juſt ground* of confidence, but ſometimes it ſwells up into an *aſſurance* of God's favour, tho' this is *too weak* a foundation for ſuch a ſuperſtructure to reſt upon. Faith, ſo far as it is the *means* of our ſalvation, that is, ſubſervient to make men *wiſe* and *good*, ſo far it is highly, *beneficial* to them, and ought to be eſteemed and acknowledged as ſuch; but, then, it ought by no means to be ſet upon a *level* with that wiſdom and goodneſs to which it is *inſtrumentally ſubſervient*; becauſe as that is very *wrong* in itſelf, ſo it has a tendency to *miſlead* and *betray mankind*. Again,

Some men think that, by their *ſerious* and *conſtant attendance* upon *goſpel-ordinances*, they render themſelves approveable in the ſight of God; and, as they think, experience in themſelves the *Spirit of God moving upon the troubled waters of their hearts*; and from hence, as from the *wells of ſalvation*, they draw forth that *comfortable cordial*, *viz.* an

aſſurance

aſſurance, or, at leaſt, a *good hope*, as they think, of Gods favour; whereas, in truth, *this is forſaking the fountain of living water*, *viz.* that *virtue* and true *goodneſs* which alone will render us acceptable to our Maker, *and hewing out to ourſelves ciſterns*, *broken ciſterns which can hold no water*; that is, it is laying in a *falſe foundation* of comfort to ourſelves. Goſpel ordinances were intended to *lead men* to, and to *eſtabliſh* them in virtue, as I obſerved above; and, when they are uſed in ſuch a way, as to be ſubſervient to this end, they are highly uſeful to us, and ought to be conſidered as ſuch; but, then, they ought not to be *valued*, and put upon an *equal foot* with that *end* to which they are only a means; becauſe, as this is not the *truth* of the caſe, ſo it tends to the *hurt* and *damage* of mankind, by laying a falſe foundation of hope and comfort, as I obſerved above. Again,

Some men render a *vicious courſe of life* eaſy to themſelves, and preſume that they are *beloved* and *accepted* of God, on the account of the *life*, and *death*, and *reſurrection of Chriſt*; and this, when added to either or to both the forementioned ground of comfort, fills them with all *joy* and peace in themſelves; whereas it is *morally* as *impoſſible* for God to love and value any perſon, upon any other account than is being truly lovely and valuable in himſelf, as it is for him to be a *weak* or a *vicious* being. The ſufferings and death of Chriſt were inſtances of the moſt *exalted virtue*, and of his exceeding great *love* and *good-will* to mankind; and, therefore, the *memory* of them ought to be *perpetuated* with the utmoſt *reſpect* and *thankfulneſs* by us. And as far as a *ſenſe* of the life. and ſufferings, and death of Chriſt, has an *influence* upon our tempers and actions, ſo far it is the *means* of our *ſalvation*, as I obſerved above, and ought to be conſidered as ſuch. But,

then,

then, the life, and ſufferings, and death of Chriſt conſidered *abſtractedly* from the *influence* which a *ſenſe* of theſe may, and ought to have upon our tempers and actions, cannot poſſibly be a *juſt ground* of confidence in God's favour; becauſe it is not theſe, but ſomething which is *perſonally valuable* and *pleaſing* in us, which muſt render us acceptable and well-pleaſing to God. And, therefore, theſe are not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the *grounds* of divine acceptance, nor ought ſo to be conſider'd; becauſe as ſuch a repreſentation is *wrong*, ſo it had been exceedingly *pernicious* to mankind.

Upon the whole, if my admoniſher had thought that faith, goſpel-ordinances, and the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, were proper to be conſidered and treated of, as *means* of our *ſalvation*, in the *ſenſe* in which I have ſhewn they are; and if he had judged that ſuch a performance would have been *uſeful* to *mankind*, he was at liberty to have treated of this ſubject, as largely as he pleaſed, in a *diſcourſe* of his own; and ſo might have *ſupplied* every defect which he *imagined* he had diſcovered in mine. But, then, this would not have *juſtified* his *groundleſs* complaints againſt me, becauſe I did not undertake to ſhew, what is in a *remote ſenſe*, but what is *directly* and *immediately*, and *for its own ſake*, the *ground* of divine acceptance? And if my admoniſher judged that faith, goſpel-ordinances, and the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, are *directly* and *immediately* the grounds of divine favour, that is, that theſe do, *upon their own account*, and not on the account of that *influence* they have upon men's tempers and actions, render them acceptable to God: I ſay, if he judged this to be the caſe, which, I think, he muſt, or elſe his complaints were *trifling*; then, ſurely, he is *miſtaken* in a point of the greateſt concern,

cern, and which has been moſt *pernitious to mankind*, as I have ſhewn above.

Thus, Sir, I have gone thro' your *Admonition*, and have taken a ſhort view of the ſeveral points *complained* of in it, preſuming I ſhall be *acquitted* of the charge laid againſt me by every *diſcerning*, *impartial*, and *unprejudiced* judge. And, to conclude this Letter, I beg the favour, that, if you have any more admonitions in ſtore for me, you would be pleaſed to put your *name* to them, that ſo we may be upon an *equal foot*. And tho' you have laid hold of every *trifling* occaſion, to juſtify your negative but groundleſs charge, and have *ſuggeſted* and *inſinuated* ſeveral things of me, which are not *juſt*, nor *friendly*, but perfectly *unkind*; yet as I take the admonition, upon the whole, to be the produce of your *pious* but miſguided zeal, and to be intended for *mine* and the *publick good*, ſo I, again, return you my *hearty thanks*, and crave leave to ſubſcribe myſelf,

SIR,

Your obliged humble Servant,

THO. CHUBB.

TRACT

TRACT XXXI.

A few Things humbly offered to the Consideration both of *Believers* and *Unbelievers*, in these happy Days of Liberty of Enquiry.

WE of this *age* and *nation* enjoy many privileges and advantages, which other ages and nations have been strangers to. One of which is a *liberty of enquiry* into matters of *religion*. For tho' men's professing their opinions freely, in some points, may be contrary to the *laws* of this *kingdom*, and though there may be some among us, who *wish* to see the laws rigorously executed upon their neighbours, in this respect; yet these are under a proper and a happy *restraint*, by the just and wise administration of the present government. Surely, nothing can be more *unjust* or *unreasonably assuming*, than for any man, or body of men, to take upon them to *direct* and *govern* the understandings and consciences of others, in matters of *religion*; that is, in matters relating to the *favour* of *God*. For as religion is purely *personal*, and every man must be answerable for himself to *God*; so every man must, in reason, have a *right* to judge for himself, in all matters pertaining thereto; and, consequently, it must be *just* and *reasonable* in our governours, to *indulge* their subjects in the enjoyment of that right. And as such indulgence is just and reasonable in itself, so it is most certainly *wise* and *politick*. For when the people of any nation are *made* or *suffered* to afflict and persecute one another, for religious matters, in which the good, or hurt,

hurt, of the community is not concerned, then the *ſtrength* and *power* of that nation is employed to *weaken* and *deſtroy* itſelf; as ſuch diviſion, enmity, and oppoſition, in any nation, naturally tend to its diſſolution. However, this is not our caſe, *perſecution* being an evil which our governours *have*, and, I truſt, *will* carefully guard againſt. But,

Tho' a liberty of enquiry is kindly indulged, yet we do not ſee all the *good effects* which might be expected from it; and eſpecially with reſpect to the *grand queſtion* betwixt the *Believers* and the *Unbelievers*; this being a time, in which one might hope to ſee that queſtion fully and clearly diſcuſſed, every objection and difficulty fairly removed, and truth ſettled upon the moſt ſolid and laſting foundation; which, I think, as yet, does not appear to be the caſe, each party being too apt to *wander* from the ſubject, and to endeavour the *expoſing* each other more than the diſcovery of truth. The Unbeliever, inſtead of fairly propoſing his own objections, is too apt to fiſh after the *weak* and *abſurd* things, which have been at any time ſaid by *Believers*. And as this becomes a ground of *triumph* to him, ſo hereby he awakens the *paſſions* of ſome, and gives occaſion for *laughter* and *diverſion* to others. But, ſurely, the chriſtian religion is not anſwerable for all the *wild* and *extravagant* things, which any of its profeſſors have put upon it; and, therefore, I think it *unfairly* urged by the Unbelievers, and to be an *abuſe* of that liberty, which they are kindly indulged in. Whether *prophecy*, *miracles*, or ſuch other topicks, as are urged to prove the *divinity* of the chriſtian revelation, do, when fairly and impartially examin'd and conſider'd, *prove* or make good that propoſition, is the queſtion betwixt the Believers and Unbelievers: and, therefore, if the

Unbe-

Unbelievers would ſhew the *weakneſs* of thoſe grounds, upon which that propoſition is founded, they ought to confine themſelves to the queſtion before them, and not introduce that into the caſe, which is foreign to it. I grant, that the Unbelievers are under a very great difficulty, in the preſent caſe; becauſe, if they ſhould be *open* and *frank* in declaring their opinions and objections, they are not *ſure* they ſhall not fall under a *proſecution*. But, then, tho' this may be proper ground to act with *caution*, in order to guard againſt any evil which ſuch freedom may expoſe them to; yet, ſurely, it cannot be any ground for *trifling* in argument, or to miniſter occaſion for *diverſion*, in a queſtion which ought to be treated of with the utmoſt ſerioufneſs. Believers are likewiſe too apt to *wander* out of their way, and to fiſh after the *perſonal faults* of the *Unbelievers*; and, from hence, they raiſe a battery againſt *infidelity*; and will have it that unbelief, with reſpect to the *divinity* of the chriſtian revelation, is not the reſult of a *free enquiry*, but the produce of *vicious inclinations*; and that men chuſe to be *Infidels*, in order to get rid off thoſe *reſtraints* and *reluctancies*, which otherwiſe they would be liable to. This, I think, is uſing the Unbelievers exceedingly *unkind* and *ill*, as if what was true of ſome muſt be *juſtly chargeable* upon all; and as if a man could not be an Unbeliever, that is, in common language, a *Deiſt*, but he muſt be deſtitute of all *honour* and *conſcience*, *virtue* and *religion*; whereas *Deiſm* is not *ſubverſive* of theſe, but perfectly conſiſtent with them. And, if I am not miſinform'd, the thing is *falſe*, in *fact*; that is, there are many *Deiſts* who are men of ſtrict honour, virtue, and religion. And,

As Believers and Unbelievers are thus uſing each other *ill*; ſo hereby they alienate their *affections*

tions from each other, inflame one another's *paſſions*, ſtir up *reſentment*, and bar up the way to that *kindneſs*, *friendſhip*, and *brotherly love* to each other, which are eſſential to, and are ſome of the moſt principal parts of true religion. And, if any thing farther were in their power, it is to be feared they would not ſtop here, but would go into all thoſe inſtances of cruelty and perſecution, which others have practiſed. This is what ſome men ſhew *too ſtrong* an inclination to, tho', by the bleſſing of a good government, they are happily *reſtrained*. But this is not all; for, whilſt the Believers and Unbelievers are thus *playing* upon each other, they miniſter occaſion to men of *gay tempers* and *little reflection*, to throw up the whole, as an *amuſement*, and to conſider it only, as a proper ſubject for *laughter* and *ridicule*; for when they ſee ſo much wrangling about the *grounds* of *divine revelation*, which they conſider as the *grounds* of *religion*, tho' theſe are as diſtinct and different, as two things can be, and ſo little certainty on either ſide, for any thing that appears to them, then they are too eaſily led to think, that religion has no *ſolid foundation*; that it only ſerves the purpoſes of *crafty* and *deſigning* men; and that is right for them to give a *looſe* to their appetites and deſires, and to gratify every vicious inclination. This, I fear, is too much the truth of the caſe; that, whilſt men are contending about the *divinity* of the chriſtian revelation, *religion itſelf* is wearing out of the world; men either *throw it up*, or elſe exert ſuch zeal in its favour as is *ſubverſive* of it. And, therefore, I think, it cannot be amiſs, but rather ſuitable and proper, to remind mankind, that whatever *difficulty* or *perplexity* may attend revelation, which may miniſter occaſion for diſpute, their *religious* obligations are the ſame. For, ſuppoſing the *divinity* of a revelation to be moſt *manifeſt*

nifeſt and *clear*, the Believers *moral obligations* muſt be the ſame, as if it manifeſtly appear'd to be *otherwiſe*; becauſe thoſe obligations are *antecedent* to, and *independent* of ſuch a revelation; and, conſequently, the caſe muſt be the ſame, with reſpect to the *Unbelievers* alſo. And as this is a matter which equally concerns them both, ſo I beg leave to offer a few things to their conſideration. I ſhall not enter into the queſtion or point in controverſy betwixt them, but only make ſuch *reflections* as are *equally juſt*, whether this or that revelation be of a divine original, or not. And,

Firſt, I obſerve, that whatever *uncertainty* may attend any revelation, yet it makes no alteration, with reſpect to *true religion*, that not being a precarious thing founded on *arbitrary pleaſure*, and thereby liable to perpetual change and alteration, but on the *moral fitneſs* of things; and, therefore, muſt be the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever. For as *duty* neceſſarily ſuppoſes an *intelligent being*, who is naturally qualified to diſcern and judge of *good* and *evil*, or that moral fitneſs and unfitneſs which ariſes from the nature and the relations of things, and likewiſe a *power* and *liberty* of acting one way, or the other; ſo the duty, which lies upon ſuch a creature, muſt neceſſarily conſiſt in acting agreeably to the *nature* and the *relations* of things, as aforeſaid. And whoever takes an impartial view of *human nature* will ſee, that man is a creature exceliently conſtituted to anſwer the purpoſes of *ſocial felicity*, and to promote and carry on a common happineſs; all his appetites and paſſions, when rightly directed and kept within due bounds, ſo as that one is not indulged to the depreſſing of another, *lead* to this *end*, by rendering man, upon the whole, an *agreeable* and an *uſeful creature*. His underſtanding likewiſe qualifies him not only to direct and govern his appetites

and paſſions, but alſo ſhews him the *fitneſs* of a common good, and the intrinſick *excellency* and *valuableneſs* of purſuing it.

Man being thus conſtituted, it will be eaſy to know, what his duty muſt certainly be; *namely*, to put on ſuch a *temper* of *mind*, and ſuch a *behaviour*, as is ſuitable to, and becoming ſuch a creature; or, in other words, it is, *firſt*, to live under a *grateful ſenſe* of that *goodneſs*, which God hath ſhewn, in calling a multitude of creatures into being, on purpoſe to communicate happineſs to them; and in a wiſe and kind proviſion of all things neceſſary to make them ſo. And, *ſecondly*, man's duty conſiſts in a *generous* and *ſteady* proſecution of that *grand deſign*, viz. the *common felicity*, by rendering himſelf an agreeable and an uſeful creature, and thereby introducing as much *happineſs* into the creation as he is capable of doing; enjoying the bleſſings of life in ſuch a way, as is *conſiſtent* with, and *conducive* to the common tranquillity, and denying himſelf every pleaſure which comes in *competition* with, or is *deſtructive* of the common felicity. And,

As man is a creature deſigned and conſtituted to taſte of, and propagate a common happineſs; ſo, when he anſwers that end, by *promoting* the peace and comfort, the happineſs and well-being of all around him, and *contributes* to the common felicity, as much as in his power; as he, then, becomes a valuable and a lovely creature, ſo, of courſe, he will be accepted and approved of God. And, on the other ſide, if he *viciouſly monopolizes* the bleſſings and comforts of life to himſelf, and *covetuouſly* purſues his own pleaſures and deſires, when they are *deſtructive* of the happineſs of others, and ſtand in *oppoſition* to the common felicity; as, in this caſe, he commences a diſagreeable and a hurtful creature; ſo he will be diſpleaſing and

vile

vile in the eyes of his Maker. And as our duty arises from what we are, so it must continue *perpetually* and *invariably* the same, whilst we continue to be such creatures. Revelation cannot *add* to, nor *diminish* our duty, because it does not alter our composition; and, consequently, whatever difficulty, or uncertainty, may attend any revelation, this ought not to be the ground of *Libertinism*, or the foundation of *uneasiness* to us; seeing our duty may easily be discovered without it, and seeing *true religion* and our *obligations* are the same, whether this or that revelation be of a *divine* original, or not. Again,

Secondly, I observe, that tho' Believers and Unbelievers *differ* in opinion from each other, yet such difference in sentiments does not *alter* their compositions, nor constitute them *two* distinct species of beings; but, on the contrary, they still continue to be *men*, notwithstanding their differing in opinion, as aforesaid. And, therefore, it it is highly just and reasonable, and their bounden duty, to act a part towards each other, and towards all men, as is *suitable* to, and *becoming* human nature, and to preserve and maintain their *manly character*. Surely, nothing can be more absurd than to suppose, that we are to put off *humanity*, in order to become *religious*. And yet it is too common for persons to commence creatures of *prey*, by biting and devouring one another, in order to exert their religious *zeal*, and to shew that they are *religious* men. Alas! we are cast into an age full of complaints of all kinds; and those which relate to religion, I imagine, are not the fewest. And, among these, some complain of the mighty growth of *scepticism* and *infidelity*, and others of the prevalency of *bigotry*, *superstition*, and *enthusiasm*. Now, whether these complaints are *well* or *ill* grounded, on either side, is

what I ſhall not enquire into. All I ſhall obſerve is, that as men are apt to exert a *bitter zeal* in theſe caſes, ſo they are likewiſe apt to *value* that zeal at too high a rate, by conſidering it, as that which will render them truly acceptable and well-pleaſing to God; but, ſurely, this muſt be a miſtake. For as divine revelation is given by God to men, on purpoſe to lead them into the *love* and *practice* of virtue and true goodneſs, by laying down ſuch *rules* of action, as were their duty, independent of, and antecedent to that revelation, by repreſenting to them the *conſequences* of a good and bad life, with regard to divine favour, or diſpleaſure, and by appointing a *form* of *worſhip*, to prevent contention and diſcord, and to preſerve peace and unity amongſt mankind; ſo, where that end is anſwered, by the love and practice of *virtue* and true *goodneſs*, ſuch men will be accepted and approved of *God*, whether divine revelation be *introductive* to it, or not. And where that end is not anſwered, but men continue in the love and practice of *vice* and *wickedneſs*, ſuch men will not be approved, tho' they believe divine revelation ever ſo ſtrongly; *faith* and *infidelity*, in the preſent caſe, being no other than the *giving* or *withholding* our aſſent to a propoſition, *viz. that this or that revelation is of a divine original*; neither of theſe, therefore, can be any farther valuable, than as they are the proper reſult of that evidence, or the want of it, upon which each of them is grounded. Faith, ſtrictly ſpeaking, does not *add* to our duty; and infidelity cannot *take* from it. And, therefore, to exert a bitter zeal, on either ſide, as it is *unreaſonable* in itſelf, ſo it cannot be *acceptable* to our Maker. All, I think, which can fairly be done in the preſent caſe, and which will become us, as reaſonable creatures, is to propoſe with *decency*, and in the *beſt light* it can be put,

put, all that can be ſaid on either ſide of the queſtion; to examine it with *care* and *freedom*; to ſhew, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, what appears to us *defective* in what has been thus offered, and then to leave each other to that conviction, which ſuch *evidence*, or the *want* or *ſeeming* want of it, ſhall produce in each other's mind; ſtill remembering that our duty, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is not affected by it.

Let not, then, the Unbeliever *deſpiſe* the Believer, nor the Believer *judge* the Unbeliever; for if neither of them anſwer their *manly character*, neither of them will be approved; and, if both of them act the part of *good* and *virtuous* men, God will receive them both. Rather let them *bear* with, and *forbear* one another in love. For as in all queſtions which do not admit of abſolute certainty, and which, I think, is the preſent caſe, it is great odds, but ſome will *err*; ſo ſuch errors cannot, in the nature of the thing, be a proper foundation for *reſentment*. The different abilities, improvements, and opportunities of different perſons, and the various ways in which men are capable of being biaſſed, that is, of leaning to one ſide of a queſtion, rather than to the other; theſe lay a foundation for error. And as, in all queſtions of this kind, a man ought to be *modeſt* in his aſſumptions, ſeeing he is *liable* to miſtake; ſo, for that reaſon, he ought to treat *decently* and *civilly* all that differ from him, as knowing that error, in *ſuch caſes*, is what all men are liable to. The Unbeliever too often looks down upon Believers with an eye of *ſcorn* and *contempt*, and deſpiſes them, as perſons who are under the power of *ſuperſtition* and *bigotry*, and who have captivated their underſtandings to the will of deſigning *prieſts*. On the other ſide, the Believer magiſterially denounces the *judgments* of heaven

upon the Unbelievers, and conſiders them, as *enemies* to God and all that is good, and as men whom *luſt* and *ſin* have blinded, that they cannot ſee the truth. But, wherefore all this? Surely, which ſide ſoever of the queſtion is right, ſuch a conduct muſt be *wrong*, and highly diſpleaſing to that *God*, who has a common concern for the good of us all. Would it not be more *decent* and *candid* for the Unbeliever to think with himſelf, that tho' he is not convinced by the evidence propoſed, yet others may? and that, therefore, it muſt be as *right* for them to *give* aſſent, as it is for him to with-hold it? and that as men's judgments are capable of being miſled by *education*, *authority*, *vulgar opinion*, and the like, ſo they do not diſcern the *deluſion* themſelves, and that others cannot be judges for them; and, therefore, it becomes a man to be rather *jealous* of himſelf, in theſe reſpects, than to charge them, at all adventures, upon his opponents? And, would it not be alike *candid* and *becoming* for the Believer to conſider, that evidence does not appear alike *concluſive* to all perſons? and, therefore, if he is ſo happily diſcerning as to ſee the *ſtrength* and *concluſiveneſs* of an argument, when the other does not, that, then, the other ought to be object of his *pity*, but not of his *cenſure* or *contempt*? and that tho' men's judgments are as liable to be miſled by their *vicious inclinations*, as by any other cauſe; yet as this is what they are not qualified to *diſcover*, with regard to other men, ſo it muſt be exceeding *wrong* in them to charge that upon another, which they cannot be judges of, and of which they ought rather to think the contrary? I would, therefore, requeſt both *Believers* and *Unbelievers* to conſider themſelves and each other, as *men*, and to treat one another accordingly. I likewiſe beg leave to remind them, that they are creatures

tures conſtituted and appointed to contribute to, and to promote *each other's happineſs*; and that it is not their different apprehenſions, in any point, which can *leſſen*, or *take off*, this obligation; and as the only end of our being is, that we, and the reſt of our fellow-creatures, might be *happy*, ſo it is a very *wrong* way to ſecure the happineſs of *another life*, by making *ourſelves*, or *others*, miſerable in *this*. He that contributes moſt to the common felicity *here*, whether he be a Believer, or an Unbeliever, bids faireſt for happineſs *hereafter*. And he that does his utmoſt, to obſtruct the *tranquillity* of this world, is the moſt *unworthy* of, and the moſt *unlikely* to obtain the happineſs of another.

But, farther, I beg leave, *thirdly*, to offer a word of *caution* to both ſorts. To Believers my requeſt is, that they would take heed, leſt their *faith* prove a *ſnare* to them. Alas! how common is it for a *Jew* to value himſelf, becauſe he is ſuch; and ſo of all other religious parties in the world. How eaſy is it for a man who ſpends his *time*, his *ſtrength*, his *zeal* in a cauſe, which he conſiders, as the *cauſe* of *God*, to think that theſe will render him acceptable to his Maker? Whereas, if theſe are ſeparated from *true goodneſs*, that is, from a true regard to the *preſent* as well as *future happineſs* and well-being of the reſt of his fellow-creatures; then, it is morally impoſſible that he ſhould be ſo, ſeeing there is nothing which can render us *valuable* in the ſight of God, but our acting a *worthy* and a *manly* part. Our rendering ourſelves *agreeable creatures*, by acting conformably to our compoſition, is that, and *that only*, which will render us *acceptable* to the Author of it. Let not, then, a *ſtrong perſuaſion* of the truth of divine revelation, and a *zealous* contending for it, blind our eyes, by leading us to think

that theſe, or any thing ſhort of *perſonal virtue*, will render us worthy of divine regard; but let us endeavour to anſwer the great end of all *divine revelation*, which is to make us *good creatures*, by acting a part ſuitable to, and becoming our rational and manly nature; and then we ſhall not fail of God's favour. Again, my requeſt to the Unbeliever is, that he would take heed, leſt his *infidelity* lead him to *Libertiniſm*. Alas! how eaſy is it for him to *ſplit* upon this *rock!* for when he ſees that the generality of men make revelation the *only ground* of religion; and when he judges that the *divinity* of that revelation has no *ſolid foundation*, he is then in danger of drawing this *falſe concluſion* from thoſe premiſes, *namely*, that he is under *no religious obligation* at all; and, conſequently, that he is perfectly at *liberty* to gratify every vicious inclination. I would, therefore, beg leave to remind him, that however the caſe may ſtand, with regard to the *divinity* of this or that revelation, yet this makes no *alteration*, with regard to *true religion*. He is a *man*; and, from hence, his *religious* obligations ariſe. He is a *moral agent*, who is excellently conſtituted to promote and carry on a *common happineſs*; and, therefore, it muſt and will be his *duty*, to put on ſuch a temper of mind, and ſuch a behaviour, as is *ſuitable* to, and *becoming* ſuch a creature. But, farther,

Let me entreat both Believers and Unbelievers not to *play upon*, and *ſport* themſelves with each other's *weakneſs*, but rather in a decent and manly way endeavour the removing it, and, if that cannot be done, to cover it with the *mantle* of *love*. It is true, *ridiculous* things are and will be the *objects* of *ridicule*; but, then, it ought to be remembered, that the proper end of ridicule is, in a way of *pleaſantry*, to convince the judgments of thoſe men,

men, who would not be ſo eaſily convinced, in a way of *grave argument*. For, when they ſee that the *fool's coat* is the natural dreſs of their *opinions* or *practices*, this gives them a *jealouſy* that there is ſome defect in the arguments that convince them, which jealouſy otherwiſe they would not have. I ſay, the proper end of *ridicule* is to *convince* the *judgment*, and thereby to remove the *ridiculous object*; and not to awaken reſentment, and inflame the paſſions; and, therefore, every man, who practiſes in this way, ought to take care, that, if poſſible, the *proper end* of ridicule may be anſwer'd by it.

To conclude this head; give me leave to repeat what I have already ſo often obſerved, *namely*, that our *different* apprehenſions, in any point, cannot poſſibly *cancel* the obligation we are under to *love* and *do good* to each other; much leſs will it *juſtify* or *excuſe* any inhuman action. For as our religious obligations ariſe from our being *men*, ſo they muſt and will remain upon us, whilſt we continue to be ſuch. I will only add, that we are *men*, and, as ſuch, our underſtandings are liable to be *miſled*; and if error is a proper foundation for *reſentment*, which, ſurely, it is not, then, let him that is *free* caſt the firſt ſtone. Again,

Fourthly and laſtly, I beg leave to remind the *Unbelievers*, that however the caſe may ſtand, with regard to the *divinity* of this or that revelation, yet the *ſolid grounds* of a *future judgment* and *retribution* are the ſame; and, therefore, their *rational hopes* and *fears*, ariſing from the expectation of ſuch a judgment and retribution, ought not to be *weakened* or *deſtroyed* by it. Man is an *intelligent free creature*, who is naturally qualified to diſcern and judge of good and evil, and to direct his actions accordingly; and, conſequently,

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he is capable of *promoting* or *hindering* the common happineſs, by rendering himſelf an agreeable and uſeful, or a diſagreeable and hurtful creature. Now, if it is *right* and *fit* in the nature of the thing, when ſuch a creature has acted his part in life, and is gone off the ſtage of action, that *God* ſhould call him to an *account* for his conduct, and render to him the due reward of his deeds in another ſtate, which, ſurely, will be granted; then, a future judgment and retribution will *moſt certainly* take place, becauſe God will always moſt certainly do what is *right* and *fit* in the nature of things, and, conſequently, future rewards and puniſhments are as *evident*, and as *certain*, from the nature of the thing, to all thoſe who *ſee* the fitneſs of ſuch a conduct, as any divine revelation can declare, or prove them to be. And that the *fitneſs* of *rewards* and *puniſhments* is ſeen and allow'd by men of all *capacities*, *nations*, and *religions*, is evident from hence, *viz.* that when any of theſe repoſe a *truſt* in any other perſon, whom they have a dominion over, they judge it right and fit to call the truſtee to an *account*, and likewiſe to ſhew their *favour* or *diſpleaſure* to him, according as he has *rightly* employ'd or *abuſed* the truſt lodged in his hand, and as that truſt has been of greater or leſs importance to themſelves, or others; which, I think, is an evident *proof*, that *all mankind* are capable of diſcerning, and muſt allow the fitneſs of future rewards and puniſhments, ſeeing nothing is more natural and eaſy to be diſcerned, than that what men are, and have, is a *truſt* lodged with them, by the Maker of all things, to be employ'd for the *common good*; and, conſequently, that they are, and will be *anſwerable* for that truſt. And,

For the farther illuſtration of this point, I beg leave to take a ſhort view of the *preſent ſyſtem* of things,

things, and of the gracious *deſign* of our Creator in calling them into being; that hereby I may vindicate the divine conduct, in *rewarding* men of virtue and honour, with a plentiful ſhare of happineſs in another ſtate, and in his *barring* vicious men from the enjoyment of that happineſs, and plunging them into unſpeakable miſery. God is a Being abſolutely *wiſe* and *good*; and as he is the Author and fountain of being to all others, ſo his ſole end, in creating all things, was, that he might *introduce* and *promote* a *common happineſs*. To have made a world, without that view, might have ſhewn the power, but not the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Creator. Whereas, to make a world, for the ſake of a common happineſs, and to make a proviſion of all things neceſſary and conducive to that happineſs; this diſcovers the perfection of *wiſdom* and *goodneſs*. And as it beſpeaks a large extent of knowledge and power, ſo it ſhews them to be *rightly employed*, by making them ſubſervient to the *beſt* of purpoſes. And this is plainly the caſe of the *preſent ſyſtem* of things, in which God has not only exerted his knowledge and power, in ſuch a *manner*, and to ſuch a *degree*, as exceed all *human conception*; but he has likewiſe diſplay'd his wiſdom and goodneſs moſt *conſpicuouſly*, by diſpoſing the whole, as *beſt* ſerves the purpoſes of a common felicity. The good of the whole is the *grand deſign*; and as every individual capable of happineſs is intended to be a *ſharer* in it, ſo each and every one are intended to be *contributers* to it. Every ſpecies of *vegetables* and every tribe of *animals*, each in their place, order, and time, being deſigned either *actively*, or *paſſively*, to be ſubſervient to the *common good*. And

As man is made the chief or principal inhabitant of this globe, ſo he is qualified to have a *larger* ſhare of felicity on it than any other animal. For

For as he has, in common with the creatures below him, thoſe appetites and paſſions, which diſpoſe them to all ſenſual enjoyments; ſo he is better qualified for *procuring* thoſe enjoyments, for guarding againſt the *loſs* of them, for laying in a proviſion for their *continuance*, and for the *heightening* the pleaſures which ariſe from them. And as man is thus qualified to taſte the pleaſures ariſing from ſenſe; ſo there are other pleaſures provided for him to enjoy, which the reſt of the animal world, as far as we can diſcern, have no taſte or reliſh of. He is qualified to drink plentifully of the cup of *intellectual delight*, if I may ſo call it, by taking a view of the material world with its inhabitants; by contemplating upon the *nature*, the *relations*, the *beauty*, and *order* of things; by looking forward and backward, and ſeeing a long chain of *cauſes* and *effects*; by taking a view of his *own* frame and compoſition, and of the frame and compoſition of the reſt of the *animal* and *vegetable* world, with their *dependence* upon, and the *relation* they bear to each other; yea, he can extend his view beyond this globe to the other planets, and conſider them, with regard to their *different magnitudes*, *motions*, *denſities*, *diſtances*, and the like. In ſhort, he can indulge himſelf abundantly in this kind of pleaſure, by ranging to and fro thro' the immenſe ſpace, if I may ſo call it, of *natural truth*, each part of which affords materials for delight. Man is likewiſe qualified to ſee things in a *moral* view, and thereby to taſte pleaſures, which are of a more noble and exalted nature than thoſe abovemention'd. He is capable of viewing the preſent ſyſtem of things, conſider'd as a *ſcheme* laid out for *happineſs*; in which not only the knowledge and power, but likewiſe the wiſdom and goodneſs of God are amply diſplay'd. He can ſee, and delight himſelf in ſeeing, how each ſpecies of beings becomes

comes *ſubſervient* to the common good; how each tribe of *animals* is qualified for and diſpoſed to pleaſure, and the proviſion which is made for their enjoyment of it. And as man is thus qualified for delight, by taking a view of the kind purpoſes of his Creator; ſo he can *contribute* to his own happineſs, by *promoting* and carrying on the ſame deſign. He can every day *add* to and increaſe his own delight, by every day adding to and increaſing the *felicity* and happineſs of others. Add to this the pleaſures which ariſe from *relation*, *friendſhip*, and the like: From all which, I think, it abundantly appears, that man is qualified for a more plentiful ſhare of happineſs than any other animal. And

As man is thus *intereſted* in the common felicity, ſo he is qualified to contribute *largely* to it, by conducting his *own* actions, and directing and governing the *creatures* below him, in ſuch a manner as will be moſt *ſubſervient* to the common good. He can *indulge* or *controul* his appetites and paſſions, as his own happineſs and the happineſs of his fellow-creatures *ariſe from* and *depend* upon it. He can employ the *member* of his body and the *faculties* of his ſoul, in miniſtring aſſiſtance, ſuccour, comfort, and delight, to the reſt of his fellow-creatures. He can provide for, direct, govern, and uſe the animals below him, in ſuch a way as will be moſt for *their's* and for the *happineſs of mankind*. In ſhort, man is capable of rendering himſelf an agreeable and an uſeful creature, and of contributing *largely* to the common tranquillity. And

As man is thus qualified to promote a common happineſs, ſo he is likewiſe qualified to *ſee* the moral fitneſs of ſuch a conduct. Man is endowed with a faculty of *underſtanding*, which qualifies him to ſee things in a *moral* view, as I obſerv'd above;

above; and as happineſs is the *deſire* of every living thing, ſo every man muſt ſee that every creature has equally a *title* to it, whilſt its happineſs is *conſiſtent* with the publick good. And as there is a proviſion made for the happineſs of the *whole*, ſo, in the nature of the thing, it muſt be *intended* for the whole. And as every individual is only a *part* of that whole, ſo his *intereſt* in, and his *title* to happineſs, can only be ſuch as is *common* to the reſt of his fellow-creatures. And as man is qualified to have a *large* ſhare of the common felicity, ſo it is highly reaſonable that he ſhould *contribute* as *largely* to it; yea, as happineſs is a *natural good*, ſo it muſt be right and fit, in the nature of thing, to *communicate* it according to our power, tho' we have no other intereſt in it, but the *pleaſure* which ariſes from that communication. And as the happineſs of the *whole* is, in the nature of the thing, preferable to the happineſs of an *individual*; ſo the latter ought, in reaſon, to give *place* to the former; and, conſequently, it is right and fit that every individual, who is qualified to *ſee* that fitneſs, ſhould *deny* himſelf, when his own and the common happineſs come in *competition*. And

As virtue conſiſts in communicating happineſs, to the *ſuitable ſubjects* of it; ſo it is the height and perfection of *virtue* and *goodneſs*, to deny ourſelves, for the ſake of the publick. And as every man cannot but ſee, if he will reflect upon it, that the publick good is the *principal* object of his care, and that he ought ſteadily to purſue it, and make is own *private intereſt* ſubmit to it; ſo it is the height of *generoſity*, and, therefore, will render hin truly *valuable* and moſt *acceptable* to his Maker. And as this is the caſe of every *virtuous* perſon, in a greater or a leſs degree; ſo it moſt certainly becomes the *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* of God,

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to ſhew his *reſpect* for, and manifeſt his *love* to ſuch perſons, by amply rewarding their *merits* with a plentiful ſhare of *happineſs* in another world, and by filling them with delights, which infinightly ſurpaſs all preſent enjoyments. For as, in the preſent ſtate of things, there is no *diſcrimination* of perſons, no manifeſtation of divine *love*, or *hatred*, from any thing that comes before us; but one event happens to all, whether *virtuous*, or *vicious*; all move on according to the general frame and conſtitution of things, being under the direction of thoſe *laws* by which the natural world is governed; ſo, ſurely, it muſt be worthy of, and ſuitable to the character of *perfect goodneſs*, for God to take a time *hereafter* to manifeſt his love and reſpect to thoſe perſons, who, by their *benevolent* and *virtuous* behaviour, have rendered themſelves the ſuitable and proper objects of it. Thoſe who have thus *freely* and *generouſly* contributed to the good and benefit of the reſt of their fellow-creatures, and have occaſion'd as much *happineſs* in the world, as their condition and circumſtance in life rendered them capable of, and thereby juſtly *merited* the love and benevolence of all, are, ſurely, worthy of the *divine favour*, and of that recompence of reward, which perfect goodneſs and abſolute power are *enabled* and *diſpoſed* to beſtow upon them. Theſe are they who ſpeak their Creator's *praiſe*, by anſwering the *kind* purpoſe of their creation; and, therefore, it highly becomes the great Governour of the univerſe to do them *honour*, by giving them a kingdom which cannon be moved, and a crown of glory and happineſs which fadeth not away. And

As man is thus qualified to become a virtuous and a lovely creature, and thereby to *enlarge* his own *felicity*; ſo he is capable of the *contrary*. He can, not only neglect, but, be *injurious* to the com-

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mon happineſs. He can *oppoſe*, and, as far as his power extends, can *fruſtrate* the kind purpoſe of his Creator, and can ſet himſelf as a *bar* to the common tranquility; he can *injure* and *oppreſs* thoſe of his fellow-creatures, whom he ought to *protect* and *defend*; he can *afflict* and *grieve* thoſe whom he ought to *cheriſh* and *comfort*, and can make thoſe hearts *ſad* to whom he ought to miniſter *joy* and *delight*; he can *deſtroy* and *lay waſte*, when he ought to *build* and *plant*, and can *cut* off thoſe lives which he ought to *preſerve*. In ſhort, he can become a *diſagreeable* and a *hurtful* creature, and can render himſelf a *common enemy* to the common happineſs of mankind. And, when this is the caſe, which is ſo in a greater or leſs degree with every *vicious* perſon, then they become the proper objects of *divine reſentment*, and of the heavy diſpleaſure of *Almighty God*. For as God cannot but *love* and *approve*, and will *reward* all perſons of virtue and goodneſs; ſo he cannot but *hate* and *diſlike*, and will *ſeverely puniſh* all ſuch vicious perſons, as aforeſaid. For when men not only deprive their fellow-creatures of that happineſs in this life, which they are qualified for, and have a title to enjoy, but alſo *unjuſtly* load them with *unhappineſs* and *miſery*; then it becomes that wiſe and good Being, in whoſe hands they are, to *deprive* them of the felicity of another world, and to plunge them into *unſpeakable miſery*.

I ſhall not enter into thoſe queſtions, *viz.* Of what *kind* or *degree*, or of what *duration* that puniſhment will be, which is to be inflicted upon vicious perſon in another world? Theſe muſt be left to the *wiſdom* of a divine hand to adjuſt. But this, I ſay, that thoſe who have been ſo exceedingly *unkind* and *cruel*, as *unjuſtly* to bar others off that pleaſure and delight, which they were qualified for and entitled to enjoy, and have been ſo

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vile and *barberous* as to load others unjuſtly with *unhappineſs* and *miſery*, and thereby have fruſtrated the *gracious purpoſe* of their kind Creator towards his creatures; ſuch perſons are, in the nature of the thing, the proper objects of *divine diſpleaſure*; and it becomes the *wiſdom* and *juſtice* of Almighty God, to ſhew his reſentment at ſuch a conduct, by debarring thoſe perſons from the happineſs of another world, and by plunging them into unſpeakable miſery. Happineſs is the deſire of every *ſenſible creature*; and, therefore, it muſt be *cruel* cauſleſly to bar that from a creature, which is the natural deſire of every living thing; and to *abound* in this is to be highly criminal, and worthy of a ſevere correction. And as all vicious perſons have beed envious at, or have indulged in themſelves a diſpoſition to cut off the happineſs of others; ſo it is *juſt* and *reaſonable* that they ſhould be made to feel, in a ſenſible manner, what the want of happineſs is. Again, miſery is the *natural averſion* of all the ſenſible world; and, therefore, *cauſleſly* to make miſerable, and to abound in it, is to *deſerve* to be made miſerable in a very high degree. And as vicious perſons have barbarouſly and wickedly loaded others with unhappineſs and miſery; ſo it is *juſt* and *reaſonable* that they ſhould feel the weight of that hand, which is able to make them miſerable beyond expreſſion. And to ſuppoſe in the preſent caſe, that it is contrary to *goodneſs* to make ſuch vicious perſons miſerable, is very abſurd. Goodneſs *naturally diſpoſes* the agent, in which it reſides, to *communicate* happineſs to others, according to his power; and it as *naturally riſes up* againſt, and diſpoſes that agent to ſhew his reſentment at the *cauſleſs* communication of the contrary. To communicate miſery cauſleſly is oppoſit to *goodneſs*; and, therefore, ſuch a conduct is a proper *ground* of reſentment to a good being, and will,

in the nature of the thing, raiſe in him a *juſt indignation* againſt thoſe that practice it. And, the quicker and the ſtronger the *ſenſe* of goodneſs is upon a perſon's mind, the quicker and ſtronger will that *reſentment* be which ſpring from it, in proportion to the vileneſs of the action. And as God poſſeſſes the *height* and *perfection* of goodneſs, ſo he has the *quickeſt ſenſe* of the contrary; which will be ſhewn in that juſt diſpleaſure he will execute upon all vicious unrepenting ſinners in another world.

If it ſhould be urged, that ſuch a *wiſe* and *good* Being, as God is, will not puniſh men ſo *ſeverely* in another world, for their enjoying a few *ſhort-lived* pleaſures here: I *anſwer*: God will not puniſh men at all in another world, for their enjoying a few ſhort-lived pleaſures here. Pleaſure is what our *nature* leads us to, and what our Creator intended us for; and, whilſt we are perſuing it in ſuch a way as, in *reaſon*, we ought, we are ſo far from incurring divine diſpleaſure, that, on the contrary, we hereby render ourſelves the ſuitable and proper objects of *divine approbation*. To deſire and purſue pleaſure, conſidered as pleaſure, in ſuch a way as is *honourable* in itſelf, and where no ill *conſequence* attends the enjoyment, I think, cannot be criminal; and, conſequently, God will not puniſh men in another *world*, for their enjoying a few *ſhort-lived* pleaſures here; but it is for their *vicious* and *unreaſonable* perſuits of pleaſure, in ſuch a way as is *diſhonourable* in itſelf, and *inconſiſtent* with, and *deſtructive* of the happineſs of their fellow-creatures.

To conclude: Let not then the *vicious* man fly for ſanctuary to *infidelity* to render his vicious courſe of life *eaſy* to himſelf, endeavouring hereby to remove the tormenting fears of a *future judgment* and *retribution*; becauſe *infidelity* cannot miniſter

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any juſt ground of *comfort* to him; the caſe being the ſame, in that reſpect, whether this or that revelation be of a divine original, or not. The *certainty* of God's calling men to an account, and rendering to them a due reward of their deeds in another ſtate, does not ſo much depend upon *revelation*, as upon the *juſtice* and *equity*, the *reaſonableneſs* and *fitneſs* of the thing; and, therefore, muſt always be the ſame, whether God interpoſes and makes a declaration concerning it, or not. This, therefore, is what I would recommend to, and leave upon my reader's mind, *viz.* that he is under *natural obligations* both to *God* and *man*, from that *relation* he ſtands in to his Creator, and to his fellow-creatures; and that, in *reaſon*, he is *anſwerable* to God, for the diſcharge of them; and that it is his true *intereſt* ſteadily to perſue the great end of his creation, *viz.* the common good, by rendering himſelf an agreeable, uſeful, and lovely creature. For as this will render him the proper object of *divine* regard; ſo it is the *ſure way* to the happineſs of *this life* and of *another*. And when he has thus acted his part in life, and is gone off the ſtage of action, God will, in his due time, pronounce upon him this comfortable ſentence, *Well done good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

TRACT XXXII.

SOME SHORT

Reflections on Virtue and Happineſs.

Wherein is ſhewn,

That *Good* and *Evil* are founded in the abſtract Nature and reaſon of Things: That Selfiſhneſs and Benevolence are two diſtinct and independent Principles of Action in Man: That Virtue is ſolely founded in Benevolence; and, that the Preſerving and Cheriſhing in ourſelves a benevolent Temper and Diſpoſition is the moſt ſure Way to a Happy Life.

THAT there are ſome actions *good*, and others *evil*, in the abſtract nature and reaſon of thing, is affermed by ſome, and denied, or, at leaſt, doubted of by others. And the ground of this doubt ariſes from hence, *viz.* the *different* opinions of mankind in this reſpect; what one eſteems good, another eſteems evil, *&c.* Whereas it is urged, that if good and evil were founded in *nature*, then, the opinions and conceptions of mankind concerning them would be the ſame. And, here, I think, it muſt be allowed, that if good and evil are founded in the abſtract nature and reaſon of things, then, there muſt be ſome *common principle*, which is *ſelf-evident*, that all mankind are agreed in, which is the ground and foundation of all our reaſonings on this ſubject. But, then, I think, it muſt likewiſe be allowed on the other ſide, that if, by any *falſe reaſoning* from that principle, other principles are introduced, and, from hence, ariſe different princi-

principles, with reſpect to good and evil amongſt mankind; this, in reality, is no objection againſt good and evil being founded in *nature*, as aforeſaid.

That pleaſure and pain, or happineſs and miſery, are really *diſtinct and different* in nature; that is, happineſs is really delectable and agreeable, and miſery is really afflictive and diſagreeable, is evident from *experience* to all mankind, and, I think, muſt be evident to all other *moral agents*, who are capable of taking in the ideas which are annexed to thoſe words. So that this muſt be allowed to be a *ſelf-evident propoſition* or a *common principle*, which all mankind are agreed in; and, therefore, whatever will follow in ſtrict reaſoning, as a *juſt conſequence* from this principle, I think, ought to be allowed. As thus, If happineſs be really delightful and agreeable, and if miſery be really afflictive and diſagreeable, then, it will unavoidably follow, that happineſs is *preferable* to miſery; that happineſs is the *proper object* of our deſires and perſuits, and that miſery is the *proper object* of our averſion and ſhunning. Again, if happineſs be the proper object of our choice, in oppoſition to the abſence of happineſs, or to miſery, it will follow that when two kinds or branches of pleaſure, one greater than the other, become the object of our choice, and cannot be enjoyed together; then, in the nature of the thing, the *greater* is preferable to the leſs. For tho' the leſs be the proper object of our choice, conſidered as pleaſure, yet it ceaſes to be ſo, when it comes in competition with a pleaſure that is greater, the enjoyment of which is incompatible with it. For if it is right to *chuſe pleaſure*, becauſe it is pleaſing and agreeable; then it is right to prefer the *greater* to the leſs, becauſe the greater is *more pleaſing* and agreeable. This, I think, will follow in ſtrict reaſoning, ſuppoſing no other conſiderati-

on comes into the caſe, to direct our choice otherwiſe. Again, if miſery be afflictive and diſagreeable, then, when two of thoſe evils are preſent, and one or other of them muſt of neceſſity be ſubmitted to, it is right and fit, in the nature of the thing, that we prefer the *leſs* to the greater. For if miſery ought, in reaſon, to be *ſhunned*, becauſe it is afflictive and diſagreeable; then, in reaſon, we ought to ſhun the *greater* rather than the leſs, becauſe the greater is *more afflictive* and diſagreeable. Again, if happineſs be in itſelf really pleaſing and agreeable, and if miſery be in itſelf really afflictive and diſagreeable; then, it will follow, that the communication of happineſs is *preferable* to the communication of miſery; that the communication of *happineſs* is, in the nature of the thing, *kind* and *good*; and that the communication of *miſery* is, in the nature of the thing, *unkind* and *evil*. Again, if happineſs be proper to be choſen for *one's ſelf*, becauſe it is pleaſing and agreeable; then, it is fit and proper to be choſen for *others*, becauſe it is equally pleaſing and agreeable to them alſo. And if it is right and fit to ſhun and avoid *miſery* for one's ſelf, becauſe it is afflictive and diſagreeable; then it is right and fit to *guard* and *ſecure* others from it; and it is wrong and evil to *communicate miſery* to them, becauſe miſery is equally afflictive and diſagreeable to them alſo. I ſay, theſe conſequences evidently and unavoidably follow, ſuppoſing no other conſideration comes into the caſe, the reaſon being the ſame in both caſes; it being equally as reaſonable that all others ſhould be happy, as that we ourſelves ſhould be ſo. Again, if happineſs be the proper object of our choice, and if it is equally as reaſonable that *each individual* ſhould be happy, as that any other individual ſhould be ſo; then, it is right and fit to prefer our *own happineſs* to that of

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any other individual, when theſe come in competition. For as we are *nearer* and *dearer* to ourſelves, than any other individual; and as we have an *equal title* to happineſs with any other individual; ſo this in reaſon ought to determine our choice, in favour of *ourſelves* when our own happineſs and that of any other individual come in competition. Again, if the greater good be, in nature and reaſon, preferable to the leſs, which, ſurely, muſt be allowed, then, the conſequences are unavoidable, *viz.* that the publick happineſs is *preferable* to the happineſs of any individual; that a *more general happineſs* is preferable to a leſs general, *&c.* Theſe are conſequences, which, I think, will follow in ſtrict reaſoning, from the one common and ſelf-evident principle before laid down. And, therefore, if men in their farther reaſonings, with reſpect to the great variety of complex caſes which the ſubject affords, ſhould draw any *wrong concluſions*, which it is eaſy to ſuppoſe may be done, and from hence, ſhould ariſe *different opinions* concerning the good, or evil, of actions in particular caſes; all that will follow, from hence, is, that men are *liable* to *err* in this, as well as in many other caſes; but it will by no means invalidate the evidence I have here produc'd, to prove the following propoſition, *viz. That good and evil are founded in the abſtract nature and reaſon of things.* And

If there are any of our ſpecies, who taſte pleaſure in, and by the *pain* and *miſery* which they *communicate* to their fellow-creatures, which it is hard to ſuppoſe; and as it is not the caſe of our ſpecies in general, ſo it is not the reſult of the human conſtitution, but muſt be the effect of ſome diſorder in the *particular conſtitution* of each individual; it will not follow in reaſon, that they ought to communicate that pain and miſery, in

order to taſte the pleaſure which will ariſe to themſelves thereby, but the contrary. For as the affection is *vicious*, as it is excited by an object that is in itſelf *evil*, and thereby naturally tends to introduce evil and miſery into the world; ſo, for that reaſon, it ought not to be gratified and indulged, but to be *checked* and *reſtrained*. And if a man ſhould be led by ſuch a vicious affection to purſue pleaſure, yet he could not in reaſon *juſtify* his conduct herein, any more than he could, if by a *vitiated palate* he taſted pleaſure, in eating or drinking ſuch things as were *deſtructive* to his *health*, and yet would eat and drink thoſe things, to give himſelf the pleaſure that aroſe from them, which in reaſon he ought not. For as his vitiated appetite naturally leads him to *hurt* and *injure himſelf*, and, therefore, ought in reaſon to be reſtrained; ſo his vitiated affection naturally leads him to *hurt* and *injure others*; and, therefore, it ought in reaſon to be reſtrained alſo. *Nature* leads him to purſue pleaſure in each caſe; but, then, the *circumſtances* which attend them render it fit and reaſonable, that he ſhould deny himſelf, and not gratify thoſe inclinations. As to the pleaſure which a man takes in *ſhooting a partridge*, and the like, theſe are caſes which, I think, do not come in to the preſent queſtion; becauſe the *pleaſure* of the one does not ſpring from the *miſery* of the other, but from a variety of other cauſes, *viz.* the *exerciſe* a man gives his body by riding, or walking; the entertaining his *eye* with a variety of objects that are preſented to his view; the exerciſing his *dexterity* in ſhooting; the proſpect of obtaining a *prize* which the game is conſider'd to be; the hope of gratifying his *appetite*, or entertaining his *friends* with what he makes himſelf the maſter of; the diſcharging himſelf from other *enjoyments* for a time, that he may taſte the

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greater pleaſure upon his return to them; theſe, and the like, I preſume, are the *ſprings* of *action*, and the *foundation* of that *pleaſure* which a man taſtes in ſuch exerciſes, and not the *pain* and *miſery* of the creature. So that the queſtion here will be, not, whether one creature may *juſtifiably* take pleaſure in communicating pain and miſery to another? that not being the preſent caſe; but, whether the taking away the life of the creature *in this way*, which, of courſe, will introduce pain and miſery to it, tho' it be not intended, be in reaſon *juſtifiable?* And here the good of the *whole* comes into the caſe; that is, whether the taking away the life of the creature, as aforeſaid, be for the good, or hurt, of the creation in general, of which, I think, the *former* is the caſe; but that is a queſtion which is not to be diſcuſſed here. And

As actions are good, or evil, and, as ſuch, are the proper objects of our *approbation*, or *diſlike*, when conſider'd in the abſtract nature and reaſon of things; ſo thoſe actions render the *actor* the proper object of approbation or diſlike to every other moral agent. And as far as the *good*, or *hurt*, of others is concerned in them, they naturally and juſtly tend to awaken the affections of *benevolence*, or *reſentment*. And, from hence, ariſe the equity and reaſonableneſs of God's *rewarding virtuous* and *puniſhing vicious men*, *viz.* becauſe the one freely communicates happineſs, which, in reaſon, he ought to do, and ſo renders himſelf the *proper object* of divine kindneſs and benevolence; and the other freely contributes to the *cauſleſs* communication of miſery, which, in reaſon, he ought not; and thereby renders himſelf the proper object of divine *reſentment* and *correction*. And, indeed, if this were not the caſe, then, the divine conduct, in the adminiſtration of rewards and puniſhments,

niſhments, could not be *juſtified*; becauſe there would not be any thing in nature which would render his creatures the *proper objects* of either.

If it ſhould be urged, that the equity and reaſonableneſs of the divine conduct, in this caſe, are not founded on the antecedent good, or evil, of actions, when conſider'd abſtractedly, as aforeſaid, but on the *abſolute will of God*, who as he has been pleaſed to give a law or rule of action to his creatures; ſo it is *juſt* and *reaſonable* that he ſhould *ſupport* his *authority*, by rewarding thoſe who obey, and by puniſhing thoſe who tranſgreſs that law, ſeeing he has made known his pleaſure herein. I *anſwer*; what is urged implies a *contradiction*; for if there be not an antecedent fitneſs or unfitneſs in actions, then, it is neither *juſt* nor *unjuſt*, neither *good* nor *evil*, neither *reaſonable* nor *unreaſonable*, for God to interpoſe and ſupport his authority. Beſides, upon the preſent ſuppoſition, there is not any thing in nature that can be the ground and foundation of a *divine law*; that is, there is not any thing in nature which affords a *motive* or *reaſon* to God, to give a law to his creatures; neither is there any thing in nature which renders one action *preferable* to another, to be the *rule* of that law. And, if God ſhould, from mere *ſovereignty* and *arbitrary pleaſure*, give a revelation to his creatures; then, the moſt abſolute *ſcepticiſm* or *uncertainty* would follow upon it; becauſe all grounds of *confidence* in God are taken away upon this principle. For if God acts arbitrarily in *one inſtance*, he may in another, and ſo on. If he gives a revelation without reaſon, or rather, if there be no ſuch thing in nature as reaſon and fitneſs for him to direct his actions by; then, he may *deceive* and *impoſe* upon his creatures in any, or in all the declarations he makes to them, for any thing we *know*, or for any *grounds* we have, from

from which we may conclude the contrary; then, *truth* and *falſhood* ſtand upon a foot, with reſpect to God, and we are under an *abſolute uncertainty*, which he will chuſe. And, on the other ſide, if there is a *rule* of *action* ariſing from the *natural relations* and the *eſſential differences* in things; and if it is *right* and *fit* that God ſhould govern his actions by that rule; then, I think, it will follow, that it ought, in reaſon, to be a rule of action to every other *moral agent*, becauſe what renders it it right and fit to one renders it equally ſo to all. And this leads me to obſerve,

That as natural good or happineſs is, in reaſon, preferable to natural evil, or miſery; ſo the *free* communication of the former is in itſelf *beautiful*, *lovely*, and *praiſe-worthy*; and, as ſuch, is the proper object of choice or election to every moral agent; in oppoſition to non-action, or to the cauſleſs communication of the contrary. And, conſequently, it is to every moral agent a *proper* and *ſufficient* foundation for action, when conſider'd abſtractedly from, and independent of any other conſideration. And this is plainly the caſe, with reſpect to *God*. For as *ſelfiſhneſs* cannot poſſibly be a ſpring or principle of action in him; ſo it is the natural and eſſential beautifulneſs and lovelineſs of communicating happineſs, and the natural unfitneſs and diſagreeableneſs of the cauſleſs communication of the contrary, which are the *grounds* and *reaſons* of his actions. It was from a principle of *benevolence* only, that our Creator exerted his power and wiſdom, in calling this world into being; and it is from the *natural* and *eſſential differences* in things, from which ariſes that *law* of *reaſon* by which God always directs his actions. And as man is, by his natural frame and compoſition, a *moral agent*, that is, capable of diſcerning the natural and eſſential differences

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in things; ſo, from hence, it will follow that he is *capable* of communicating happineſs *freely*, and for its own ſake, or from a ſenſe of the beauty and lovelineſs of it, when conſider'd abſtracted from, and independent of any other conſideration, and, therefore, *can do it, if he will.* For tho' man is an *indigent* creature, and that naturally leads him to purſue his own happineſs; yet that is not in itſelf incompatible, but conſiſtent with a free and diſintereſted regard for, and purſuit of, the happineſs and well-being of the reſt of his fellow-creatures; becauſe he is not only qualified to purſue *both*, but alſo to diſcern the *fitneſs* of that purſuit.

Happineſs is the *great end* of being to every ſenſible creature; and, therefore, the particular happineſs of each individual muſt and will be the object of deſire to every ſuch creature; and, conſequently, *ſelfiſhneſs* is the produce of, or is a part of the *human conſtitution.* But tho' private happineſs be the object of deſire to every man, yet it not the *ſole* and *only* object of that affection; for as happineſs is *deſirable* for one's ſelf, ſo it is deſirable for others alſo. The agreeableneſs of pleaſure to ourſelves not only convinces us, that it muſt be alike agreeable to all others, but likewiſe diſpoſes us to *communicate* that pleaſure to them. So that *benevolence*, as well as *ſelfiſhneſs*, is the reſult of, or is a part of our *natural conſtitution*; and each of theſe are *diſtinct* and *independent* principles of action. A man can purſue his own happineſs, without any regard to the good of others, and he can purſue the good of others, without any view or regard to himſelf. And, tho' a man cannot prefer evil to good, this being as much out of his power, as it is to make the *ſmell* of a *roſe*, or the *taſte* of a *peach*, *diſagreeable* to himſelf; yet he may and can prefer the good of the *publick* to his own, when they come

come in competition. For as ſelfiſhneſs and benevolence are two diſtinct and independent principles of action in man; ſo either of theſe may be ſo far *indulged*, or *depreſſed*, as to make the one *give place* to the other. A man can ſo far indulge his *ſelfiſh*, and depreſs his *ſocial* affections, as to purſue his own good, without any regard to the good and happineſs of others; and he can ſo far depreſs his *ſelfiſh*, and indulge his *ſocial affections*, as to purſue the good of others, in *oppoſition* to his own, when theſe come in competition. And tho' private and publick happineſs are ſo inſeparably united, as that a man cannot rightly purſue his own good, but he will thereby give pleaſure to others, nor can he rightly purſue the happineſs of others, but he will give pleaſure to himſelf; yet it will not follow that either *ſelfiſhneſs*, or *benevolence*, is the ſole and only principle of action in man. For tho' theſe mutually introduce and contribute to each other; yet as they are diſtinct and different in themſelves, ſo they are two diſtinct and independent principles of action. And if it ſhould be urged, that, becauſe a man cannot rightly purſue the good of others, without giving pleaſure to himſelf, therefore, *ſelfiſhneſs* is the *ſole* and *only principle* of action in him; then, it may with equal reaſon be urged on the other ſide, that becauſe a man cannot rightly purſue his own happineſs, but he will give pleaſure to others thereby; therefore, *benevolence* is the *ſole* and *only principle* of action. But neither of theſe is the caſe, as I have ſhewn above. And tho' the actions, that flow from benevolence, will give *pleaſure* and *ſatisfaction*; yet that pleaſure is only the reſult of, and not the ground and reaſon of thoſe actions; like as when a man purſues happineſs for himſelf, he will give pleaſure to others; and yet that pleaſure and delight, which accrues to others hereby,

hereby, is only the *reſult* of, but is not the ground and reaſon of that purſuit. Benevolence and ſelfiſhneſs being both natural, or the produce of the human conſtitution, we are thereby naturally led to purſue happineſs, as well for others, as for ourſelves; only, when theſe come in competition, then, the purſuit of either is a matter of choice or election to us. And tho', with reſpect to natural good, the *motive* to thoſe actions, by which we propoſe to procure that good to ourſelves, is *ſelf-love*, or a deſire of taſting pleaſure in, and by thoſe actions, as the agreeableneſs of a *peach* to our taſte is the motive to thoſe actions, by which we propoſe to give ourſelves the *pleaſure* ariſing from that agreeable ſenſation; yet the caſe is otherwiſe, with reſpect to *moral good*, or thoſe actions which are the produce of moral fitneſs. In the one caſe we act, preſuming it will *prove agreeable* to us; and, in the other, we act, becauſe it is ſo, *antecedent* to the action. If I ſee a body *figured* and *coloured* like another body, *viz.* a *peach*, which, when bruiſed in my mouth, had given me a very *agreeable ſenſation*; I am thereby induced to bruiſe this body in my mouth likewiſe, in expectation of taſting the *like pleaſure* as from the former; tho' in this my expectation may poſſibly be diſappointed, becauſe ſome *defect* either in the fruit, or in my palate, may render it *diſagreeable* to me. So that in this caſe, tho' pleaſure is the motive to the action, yet it is not the agreeableneſs of the *action itſelf*, it being experience only which can determine, whether it will be agreeable, or not, but only the *hope* and *expectation* that it will prove ſo, which is the ground and reaſon of that action. Whereas, with reſpect to moral fitneſs, the caſe is otherwiſe; we act, becauſe it appears to us beautiful and agreeable, *antecedent* to the action, and not upon a preſumption

tion or in hope and expectation that it will prove ſo. If I ſee my neighbour in diſtreſs, it inſtantly appears *beautiful* and *agreeable* to me to interpoſe for his relief, ſuppoſing all circumſtances concur to render it fit and proper, and that I am capable of ſo doing. And, in this caſe, it is not any pleaſure or agreeableneſs *ſubſequent to*, or that are the *attendants* on the action, but it is the *antecedent beauty* and *fitneſs* of relieving which is the ground and reaſon of that action; and which will be beautiful and agreeable, whether I am prevailed upon by it to miniſter that relief, or not. And it is the antecedent fitneſs which is the *foundation* of that *pleaſure* we taſte in, and after the performance of ſuch an action, and not the pleaſure which ariſes from the performance of the action, which is the *ground* and foundation of that *antecedent* beauty and agreeableneſs.

This will be farther evident, if we obſerve, that, with reſpect to *natural good*, as in the eating of a peach, no one is ſharer by the action, in that *kind* of *pleaſure* which the action introduces, but the *actor*; whereas with reſpect to *moral good*, or the communicating happineſs to others, the *by-ſtanders*, who are no way concerned in the action, are *ſharers with*, and taſte that very kind of pleaſure *by* the *action*, that the actor doth in the performance of that action. If I ſee another man perform a good action, it give me the ſame kind of pleaſure, as if I had performed that action myſelf; whereas, if I ſee a man eat a peach, this action does not raiſe in me that *agreeable ſenſation*, which it does *in him* that eats it; which ſhews not only that there is no juſt arguing from one caſe to the other, but alſo that the *beauty* and *agreeableneſs*, which is inſeparable from thoſe actions that are *morally good*, do not ariſe from, nor depend upon the *pleaſure* which accrues to the

actor

actor in, and by the performance of thoſe actions. And tho' in many inſtances we purſue the good of others, either in *whole*, or in *part*, out of a view to our own *intereſt*; yet, ſurely, this is far from being *always* the caſe. And, I imagine, it is *ſeldom* that men do good to others, purely in view of, and for the ſake of that pleaſure and ſatisfaction, which will accrue to themſelves thereby. A ſenſe of the good of others, and the deſirableneſs of making them ſharers in the pleaſures we enjoy, are *powerful* and *ſufficient motives* to induce us to procure thoſe pleaſures to them, and that too, for their ſakes, and not for the ſake of any pleaſure which we propoſe to taſte in ſo doing. And the neglect of this naturally introduces *remorſe* and uneaſineſs of mind; the ground of which is not the with-holding pleaſure from ourſelves, but the with-holding our hand from giving that pleaſure, and doing that good to others which was in our power to do. Whilſt the *four lepers* were indulging themſelves in eating and drinking, and loading themſelves with gold and raiment, from tent to tent, in the *camp* of the *Syrians*, their hearts ſmote them, and they ſaid one to another, *We do not well: This is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace*, 2 Kings vii. 8, 9. Now, the queſtion is, what was the *ground* of ſelf-accuſation to thoſe lepers? not, ſurely, the with holding pleaſure from themſelves, but the with holding from the hungry *Citizens* of *Samaria* the opportunity of ſharing with them in that *plenty*, which the forſaken camp of the *Syrians* afforded, and which it was then in their power to put into their hands.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that tho' a man can communicate happineſs to others, when that communication is not incompatible with any enjoyment to himſelf; yet our inclinations ſo *ſtrongly*

diſpoſe

diſpoſe us to purſue happineſs for *ourſelves*, that, except we have the promiſe and expectation of ſome greater good to be enjoyed hereafter, which will *make up* for the loſs we ſuſtain here, we cannot be prevailed upon to part with our preſent happineſs, and ſubmit to ſuffer for the ſake of ſociety, or upon any other conſideration. I *anſwer*, As we are naturally inclined to purſue happineſs for ourſelves, ſo that inclination leads us to purſue our *preſent* happineſs, or the pleaſure which comes before us, and is *immediately* in view, in oppoſition to any future happineſs which may be incompatible with it; but, then, thoſe natural inclinations, how ſtrong ſoever they may be, are under the government of, and are *controulable* by our *reaſon*; ſo that we can *deny* ourſelves a preſent pleaſure, and can ſubmit to bear *preſent miſery*, in hope and expectation of ſome greater good laid up for us in futurity. And our reaſon can likewiſe, if *exerted*, govern and controul thoſe *very inclinations* from *another view*; ſo that we can deny ourſelves, and ſuffer, as aforeſaid, when it is apparently ſubſervient to the *common good*. Our natural inclinations are *controuled*, in both caſes, by our *reaſon*, and our reaſon can as well exert its authority, and reſtrain thoſe inclinations, in one caſe, as in the other. And as the difference betwixt natural good and evil, betwixt publick and private happineſs, and the natural beauty and deſirableneſs of communicating pleaſure, and the like, are *eternally* and *unchangeably* the ſame, conſider'd abſtractedly from, and antecedent to any *poſitive law*, which might conſtitute them or any *promiſe* of future good, which might influence in the choice of them; yea, antecedent to the conſideration of a *Deity*; ſo that rule of action, which naturally ariſes from them, and the fitneſs and reaſonableneſs of our governing our actions by

that rule, are *perpetually* and *unchangeably* the ſame, when conſider'd abſtractedly from, and antecedent to all the conſiderations beforemention'd. Whether the foremention'd rule of action may in ſtrictneſs be called a *law*, and whether the fitneſs of governing our actions by that rule may properly be called an *obligation*, according to the uſe of thoſe words, *law* and *obligation*, in the *Engliſh language*, I think, is not worth enquiring into; but that there is ſuch a *perpetual* and *unchangeable rule* ariſing from the nature, the relations, and the eſſential differences in things, and that moral agents ought, in reaſon, to *direct* and *govern* their actions by that rule, is as evident and clear to my underſtanding, as that the whole is equal to all its parts, or as any other ſelf-evident propoſition. And,

Tho' ſelfiſhneſs and benevolence are both the produce of, and are the natural reſult of the *human conſtitution*; yet it is what ſprings from the *latter* only, which comes under the denomination of *goodneſs* and *virtue*. * If a man purſues happineſs for himſelf, and prefers his own good to that of any other individual; this, I think, is perfectly juſt and reaſonable, and is what approves itſelf to the underſtanding of every man. But, then, there is nothing of *virtue* or *goodneſs* in it, as thoſe terms are commonly applied amongſt mankind; they being uſed to expreſs *communicative goodneſs*, and not the good a man does to himſelf. If a man does good to himſelf, the idea, raiſed in our minds hereby, is expreſſed by the the term *ſelfiſhneſs*; he ſerved or miniſter'd to himſelf. But if a man does good to others, for that reaſon, be-

* *Note*, The words *virtue* and *goodneſs* are here taken in a *reſtrained* or *limited* ſenſe; and are uſed to expreſs, not all thoſe actions which are, in reaſon, *approveable*, but only ſuch as are, in reaſon, *rewardable*.

cauſe

cauſe he would do ſo, the idea raiſed in our minds by it is expreſſed by the term *goodneſs*; he did good, that is, he ſerved or miniſter'd to the good of others; the terms *good* and *virtuous*, in this caſe, being generally confin'd to thoſe actions which are the produce of *benevolence*. It is, when we purſue the good of others, in *diſtinction* from, or in *oppoſition* to the good of ourſelves, that our actions come under the denomination of *good* and *virtuous* actions; and they are more or leſs ſo, as the good and happineſs of others is more or leſs the *ground* and *reaſon* of thoſe actions. And as far as a view of our own good comes into the caſe, ſo far the goodneſs and virtuouſneſs of thoſe actions is *leſſened* and *decreaſed*. And the reaſon of this is evident, *viz.* becauſe the actions only, which ſpring from benevolence, render the actor *amiable* and *rewardable* to a foreign agent, who is diſintereſted in thoſe actions. When a man does *hurt* to himſelf thro' ſome wrong conduct, tho' this would render him worthy of *blame*, and tho' his actions would be *diſapproveable*; yet here is nothing which excites the *reſentment* of a *by-ſtander*, and which would render him *worthy* of *correction*, upon that account; he has done *no evil* to others, and, therefore, he can *deſerve* no evil from them. So likewiſe, when a man does good to himſelf, how *reaſonable* and *juſt* ſoever this may be, yet there is nothing *valuable* in it, which *merits reward*, or which excites a *by-ſtander* to contribute to ſuch a man's *felicity*; for as he ſought *himſelf* only in that action, ſo he *cannot* deſerve any thing from another, upon the account of it. Whereas, when a man purſues the good of *another*, for that other's ſake, then he renders himſelf truly *lovely* and *amiable* in the eyes of others; and they are naturally and juſtly excited by it to contribute to ſuch a man's felicity, if ability and opportunity

concur to render them capable of ſo doing. For as he *generouſly* ſought the good of *others*, ſo he *juſtly merits* the love and ſervice of others upon that account. And, therefore, if a man purſues the good of others, partly for their ſakes, and partly for his own; as far as his own intereſt is the *ground* and *reaſon* of that purſuit, ſo far, of courſe, the virtue and rewardableneſs of it is *leſſened*. And if the ground of that purſuit be purely *ſelfiſhneſs*, then, there can be nothing virtuous or rewardable in it; becauſe it is not *ſelfiſhneſs* but *benevolence* only, which is the ground and foundation of amiableneſs and rewardableneſs in the preſent caſe, as I have before ſhewn. From which it will follow, that if ſelfiſhneſs were the *ſole* and *only* principle of action in man, then, *virtue* and *rewardableneſs* would be incompatible with human nature. Again, if a man purſues the good of others, upon condition and in view of ſome preſent or future good *promiſed* to him; this, I think, would give him a *legal* and *juſt title* to what is promiſed; but, then, here is nothing of *virtue* or * *reward* in the caſe. This is all fair traffick or bargaining; here are covenants made and executed, from which virtue and reward are excluded. For as, in ſuch a caſe, man is not virtuous, but *ſelfiſh* in what he does, ſo he is not rewarded, but *paid a juſt debt* in what he receives.

If it ſhould be urged, that this *ſubverts* the deſign of the goſpel, which was to lead men to the practice of their duty, from the *hope* and *expectation* of a promiſed future reward; for if acting in view of ſome good promiſed be ſelfiſhneſs, as moſt certainly it is; and if acting from a ſelfiſh prin-

* *Note*, That the term *reward* is here taken in a ſtrict ſenſe, as expreſſing only what is given freely upon the account of merit or deſert, and not what is paid as a debt upon the account of promiſe, or otherwiſe.

ciple

ciple does not render men the proper objects of reward, as is here supposed; then, the promises of the gospel tend only to *betray* men into *selfishness*, which will not qualify them for the reward promised.

I answer, *first*, That the *common happiness* is the grand design of the present system of things, and the great end which God proposed in calling this world into being. And this end is abundantly *frustrated* by men's *indulging* their selfish, and *depressing* their social affections; this being the *grand cause* of all those evils and miseries, which mankind introduce and bring upon each other. And, therefore, if God, out of regard to the *common good*, has promised to those, who *pursue it*, the happiness of another world, tho' that pursuit be not the produce of benevolence, but only in obedience to his command, and from an expectation of what he has promised; then, God will most certainly be as good as his word, by *paying every debt* which he has thus contracted by promise; and, consequently, the promises of the gospel serve not to betray men into selfishness, and so to unqualify them for the promised reward, but to engage them to do, out of regard to *themselves*, what would be *valuable* and *rewardable* in itself, if done from a better and a more *generous principle*. Again,

I answer, *secondly*, That the great design of the gospel, and to which its promises are *intended* to be *subservient*, is to work in men a *benevolent temper* and disposition, in opposition to that *general corruption*, or *vicious selfishness*, which prevails amongst mankind, and which is the ground and foundation of all our *woe*. The great thing, recommended in the gospel, is a *spirit of love*; and as love worketh no ill to its neighbour, so it disposes the agent, in which it resides, to remove

the uneaſineſs, and contribute to the happineſs and well-being of all. And it is to thoſe who are animated by *this ſpirit*, to whom the promiſes of the goſpel are made; ſo that, where the *benevolent temper* is wanting, there is no title to thoſe promiſes. St. *Paul* was ſo ſenſible of this, that he declares for himſelf, *if he had beſtowed all his goods to feed the poor*, and *if he had given his body to be burned, and had not charity*, or a benevolent temper, *it would have profited him nothing*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. He carries the ſuppoſition to the greateſt height, and inſtances in caſes, which if actions alone, conſidered abſtractedly from the diſpoſition of mind they ſpring from, would be *valuable*, then theſe, ſurely, would be conſidered, as ſuch. And yet theſe, when conſidered *abſtractedly* from a benevolent temper, as the ground and foundation of them, St. *Paul* conſiders, as unprofitable.

Beſides, the promiſes of the goſpel are *deſigned*, and are *ſubſervient* to another purpoſe, *viz.* to render the loſſes and croſſes, the pains and afflictions, which good men are liable to, and often meet with in this world, the more *eaſy* and *tolerable* to them. For tho' *patience* and *reſignation* are the beſt and moſt alleviating remedies, which can be applied under the aforeſaid evils, and, therefore, one would think, ſhould be always choſen, for their own ſake, ſeeing the contrary to theſe does but add to the burden of affliction; yet ſad experience ſhews, that this is not always the caſe. And, therefore, when a man is directed by the *promiſes* of the *goſpel*, to look forward to a ſtate, when all pain and anguiſh ſhall ceaſe, and all tears ſhall be wiped away from his eyes, and he ſhall be filled with unſpeakable joy; this naturally tends to lead him to that *patience* and *reſignation*, which is his preſent only refuge, and which poſſibly otherwiſe he might not obtain.

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If it ſhould be urged, that if *virtue* is founded ſolely in *benevolence*, then, in many inſtances, it cannot be *ſupported*; as when a man is called to *ſevere trials* and ſufferings in the cauſe of virtue; then he has not wherewith to ſupport him under, and carry him thro' thoſe trials, except he calls in the hope and expectation of a future recompence. And, if he does that, then, as far as he acts from ſuch a view, ſo far the virtuouſneſs of his actions and ſufferings is deſtroyed.

Before I return an anſwer to this objection, it will be proper to conſider, what it is to ſuffer in the *cauſe* of *virtue* and *goodneſs*; *namely*, when that ſuffering is apparently ſubſervient to the *publick good*. So that when a man ſuffers for his *propagating* or *maintaining* this or that ſet of *opinions*, or this or that *ſpeculative propoſition*, except the propagating or maintaining ſuch opinions and propoſitions apparently tend to the publick good, this is not ſuffering in the cauſe of virtue. A man, in ſuch a caſe, may ſuffer in the cauſe of *truth*, but not in the cauſe of virtue; *truth* and *virtue* being as diſtinct and different in nature, as colour and ſound. I ſhall not enter into the queſtion, whether ſuffering for the truth be not, in ſome inſtances, *amiable* and *rewardable?* But what I obſerve is, that to ſuffer for the truth, as ſuch, conſidered abſtractedly from the good and benefit which the world may receive by that ſuffering, is not ſuffering in the cauſe of virtue. But when a man ſuffers to promote or ſecure the *good of others*, and with that view; then, I think, he may properly be ſaid to ſuffer in the cauſe of goodneſs, or for virtue's ſake.

This being premiſed, I obſerve, that a *benevolent temper*, which is the produce of, or is a part of the human conſtitution, when not *depreſſed* by the prevailing power of ſelfiſhneſs, but *cheriſhed*

and kept to its due height, and when ſeconded by *reaſon*, is a *proper foundation* for virtuous actions, in the moſt trying inſtances. True benevolence, *&c.* will diſpoſe a man to venture upon the mouth of a cannon, and look even *death* in the face, when that adventure is apparently neceſſary, to ſecure his country from *ſlavery* and *miſery*. And tho' ſelfiſhneſs ſo far prevails, as that the inſtances are but *few*, in which men *ſuffer greatly* in the cauſe of virtue, from a virtuous principle; yet it will not follow, that virtue has no ſolid foundation in nature, nor any thing by which it may be ſupported; but all that will follow is, that *eminent virtue* is rarely to be met with in the world; which poſſibly may be too true. But, then, it is equally as true, that there are but *few* men, comparatively, upon whom the promiſes of *future happineſs* have ſuch a prevailing influence, as to diſpoſe them to forego all preſent enjoyments, and to yield up themſelves to ſuffering and death, to ſecure to themſelves that future happineſs. And as it would be inconcluſive to argue, that ſeeing the promiſe of future happineſs does not *always* prevail upon men to go thro' the ſevereſt ſufferings, when called to it, for its ſake; therefore, the promiſe of future happineſs is not a proper or ſufficient foundation for ſuch ſufferings; ſo it would be alike inconcluſive to argue, in the caſe of virtue, that ſeeing benevolence, tho' ſeconded by reaſon, does not *always* prevail upon men to practiſe virtue, in the moſt trying inſtances, that, therefore, a benevolent temper, *&c.* are not a proper or ſufficient foundation for the practice of virtue, in ſuch inſtances, the argument being equally inconcluſive in both caſes. As to that queſtion, *viz.* whether a man can chuſe abſolute and extreme miſery, for the ſake of virtue? This not being the caſe of thoſe who ſuffer in the cauſe of virtue,

virtue, the queſtion is needleſs. All ſuffering in the cauſe of virtue, as it is a matter of choice or election, will yield abundant *ſatisfaction* to the mind, tho' that ſatisfaction be not the ground and reaſon of thoſe ſufferings. And

As virtue is founded ſolely in benevolence, ſo it is the preſerving and cheriſhing in ourſelves a *benevolent temper*, which is the *foundation* of a *happy life*. Happineſs is the great end of being to every ſenſible creature, as I have already obſerved; 'tis for that only that being is *deſirable*; barely to *be*, conſidered abſtractedly from happineſs, is no better than non-exiſtence. And to be miſerable, excluſive of any degree of happineſs mixed with that miſery, is worſe than not to be, in proportion to that degree of miſery which exiſtence introduces. A *happy life* is what we all deſire and purſue. Who is there, but would, who is there, but does chuſe to paſs agreeably thro' life? And yet this is what almoſt all our ſpecies, more or leſs, complain of the want of. From whence, then, is it that we are not generally happy? Surely, our Creator *intended* us for happineſs, and has *provided* whatever is neceſſary to make us ſo; and, therefore, the *ground* of this complaint muſt be *in ourſelves*. This, then, muſt be worth our enquiring into, *viz.* What is the *ground* of our miſcarriages, and which is the moſt *ſure way* to a happy life. And,

Here, if we take a partial view of the caſe, we may be led to think, that the indulging our ſelfiſh, and depreſſing our ſocial affections, is the *ſhorteſt* and *ſureſt* way to happineſs. For as, in ſuch a caſe, a man purſues happineſs only for himſelf, and this one point is what all his deſires, contrivances, and endeavours are directed to obtain, without incumbering himſelf with any care or regard for the happineſs of others; ſo, from ſuch a

view,

view, one may be led to think, that this is the moſt likely way to obtain it. But this is ſo far from being the truth of the caſe, that, on the contrary, it is the cauſe of our *miſcarriages*, and the *ground* and *foundation* of our unhappineſs. Whereas, if we preſerve a *due balance* in the human conſtitution, by keeping our ſelfiſh affections under a proper *reſtraint*, by cheriſhing in ourſelves a *benevolent* temper, and by making the *common good* the common and grand principle to direct our actions by; this is the *high road* to a happy life. And,

That we may have a full view of the caſe, it will be proper to obſerve, that a happy life is a *compoſition* of various kinds of enjoyments, *viz.* ſenſual, intellectual, and moral. And theſe are ſo *intermixed* and *reſtrained*, as that one kind, or one inſtance, does not *deſtroy*, but *heighten* the pleaſures, which ariſe from the other kinds, or the other inſtances of enjoyment; ſo that no particular enjoyment is to be taken into the account, which introduces ſuch *pain* and *vexation* in the purſuit, or leaves ſuch *remorſe* and *anguiſh* after the enjoyment, as is equal to, or more than an equivalent to the pleaſure which aroſe from that enjoyment. If I ſhould, in the drinking a gallon of liquor, taſte very agreeable pleaſure, for the ſpace of *three hours*; and if this enjoyment ſhould bring upon me *ſix hours* of intenſe pain and remorſe, and anguiſh of mind for ſo many days more; then, the forementioned enjoyment is ſo far from being a part of a *happy life*, that, on the contrary, it muſt be placed to the other ſide of the account; becauſe that, and ſo much pleaſure more, is to be ſubſtracted from other enjoyments, as is an *equivalent* to the overplus of miſery, which that enjoyment introduced, before the account, with reſpect to happineſs and miſery, will be upon a balance.

lance. Again, all the branches of enjoyment, which break in upon, and are *bars* to other kinds or inſtances of enjoyment; ſo much pleaſure muſt be ſubſtracted from theſe, as is equal to that overplus of pleaſure which they are a bar to. And if thoſe enjoyments are not equal to that overplus, ſo far as they are *deficient*, they are to be placed to the other ſide of the account, and to be conſidered, not as branches of happineſs, but as *obſtructions* to it. If a man, in heaping up a large quantity of the riches of this world, ſhould taſte ſome *low degree of pleaſure*, in reflecting upon his acquiſitions and poſſeſſions; yet, if his preſent purſuits are a bar to other enjoyments, that would give him pleaſures, which, for kind and degree, are *much ſuperior* to thoſe he now taſtes; then, thoſe pleaſures are not to be conſidered, as parts of a *happy life*, but as *bars* to that happineſs. Theſe things being premiſed, the proper queſtion will be, conſidering the various *kinds* and *inſtances* of pleaſure which a man's *conſtitution* and *condition* in life render him capable of enjoying, what courſe he ſhould take, which might, upon the whole, give him the *greateſt pleaſure*, and render life the *greateſt bleſſing* to him? And this, I ſay, will be done by preſerving a *due balance* in the human conſtitution, by *cheriſhing* in ourſelves a benevolent diſpoſition, by keeping our ſelfiſh affections under a proper *reſtraint*, and by ſubjecting our conduct to the government of *reaſon*. The iſſue of all which will be a *moderate purſuit*, and a *temperate enjoyment* of this world's good things, under a ſtrict regard to the *happineſs* and well-being of the reſt of mankind. And,

For the farther illuſtration of this point, I obſerve, that a *vicious ſelfiſhneſs* generally leads men either to a *violent* and *extravagant purſuit* of *pleaſure*, that is, to purſue this or that kind or branch of

of pleaſure, at all adventures; without regarding how a man's own good in the general is affected by it, or how it directly, or in its conſequences, affects the good of others and the happineſs of ſociety; or elſe it leads men to a *violent* and *extravagant purſuit* of *riches*, and ſo bars the enjoyment of many comforts, with reſpect to themſelves, and prevents their being kind and beneficent to others. But neither of theſe is the way to happy life; that lies ſtrait before us in a mean betwixt thoſe extremes, *viz.* in a moderate purſuit, and a temperate enjoyment of the bleſſings of life, purſuing our own happineſs, under a ſtrict regard to the common good.

As to all violent and extravagant purſuits of pleaſure, theſe, ſurely, when weighed in the balance, will be found wanting. Theſe are ſo far from conſtituting a happy life, that, on the contrary, they are *bars* to that happineſs. For thó' the *drunkard*, the *debauchee*, and the like, may taſte ſome very *agreeable* and *intenſe*, but momentary pleaſures, in their enjoyments; yet, alas! when theſe come in competition with the *intellectual* and *rational delights*, which a man bars himſelf the enjoyment of, with the *diſorder*, ſooner or later, brought upon his conſtitution; the *pain* and *anguiſh* of body, the *uneaſineſs* and *remorſe* of mind, which is intruduced thereby; the *trouble* and *vexation* he gives to others, and which, when reflected on, return back upon *himſelf*; I ſay, when every thing is taken into the caſe, then, ſtrictly ſpeaking, ſuch a man's pleaſures cannot be ſaid to conſtitute a happy life, but are bars to that happineſs. And, here, I would beg my reader to look abroad, and take a general view of thoſe perſons who violently and extravagantly purſue pleaſure; ſee them *with* and *without* their enjoyments; ſee what they go thro' in many inſtances

ſtances to *procure* them, how many *diſappointments* they meet with in their perſuit of them; how *ſhort-lived* their enjoyments are, and how heavily the time goes off in the *intervals*, having no other fountain from which they can draw forth pleaſure and delight to themſelves. See how many enjoyments, valuable in themſelves, and various in their kinds, which they *exclude* themſelves from taſting; how much pain of body and uneaſineſs of mind they, ſooner or later, draw upon themſelves; and how often they cut off their *lives* in the midſt of their days, or elſe bring upon themſelves ſuch diſorders, as render life a *weight* and *burden* to them. This, I think, will, upon a juſt enquiry, appear generally to be the caſe, with reſpect to all violent and extravagant perſuits of pleaſures whatever. *Solomon*'s condition and circumſtances in life furniſhed him with *materials* for delight, and gave him the *opportunity* of enjoyment; and he ſeemed reſolved, if poſſible, to take the *ſhorteſt* was to happineſs. And, accordingly, he informs us, that he ſet himſelf to perſue pleaſure various ways, and in the moſt violent manner, that his ſuperiour circumſtances in life rendered him capable off; but, upon trial, he found that this was not the way to *ſolid* and *laſting* happineſs. For tho', by this means, he enjoyed ſome very intent but momentary pleaſures; yet the care and ſollicitude in procuring them, the uneaſineſs mixed with them, and the unhappineſs entailed upon them, were much more than aquivalent to thoſe pleaſures; ſo that, upon the whole, he pronounces all thoſe violent and extravagant perſuits of pleaſure, as *vanity* and *vexation of ſpirit*.

The caſe is the ſame, if men go into the other extreme, *viz.* into a *violent* and *extravagant perſuit* of *riches*, denying themſelves many of the comforts

forts of life, and putting off enjoyment to the next generation. This is ſo far from introducing a a happy life, that, on the contrary, it bars up the way to it, For tho' their preſent acquiſitions and poſſeſſions, with the faint proſpect of the uſe which poſterity may make of them, may give a man ſome *low, weak pleaſure* and *ſatisfaction*; yet they are not once to be named with thoſe more intenſe and numerous pleaſures, both *ſenſual, intellectual*, and *moral*, which his conſtitution and condition in life render him capable of taſting, and which he denies himſelf the enjoyment of. Beſides, an eager perſuit of riches is ſuch a *diſeaſe* upon a man, as introduces a great deal of *care* and *ſollicitude* to procure them, a great deal of *anxiety* and *thought* how to ſecure and preſerve them, together with the *danger* and *fear* of loſing them, and the *loſſes* and *croſſes* which frequently attend them; all theſe prey upon a man's ſpirits, and eat out the *comforts* of life. And tho' ſuch men regard ſcarce any other intereſt. but their own, yet they are conſtantly *betraying* it; their very perſuits and poſſeſſions ſerving only as fuel to feed that *fire*, which conſumes the moſt *valuable pleaſures* in life. And hereby the moſt ſelfiſh are the greateſt *enemies* to themſelves, by their fruſtrating and diſappointing themſelves of that *happineſs*, which they are naturally led to deſire and perſue, and which only renders being valuable to them. So that riches, to ſuch men, are ſo far from being ſubſervient to a happy life, that, on the contrary, they bar up the way to it.

Whereas if men would avoid thoſe extreams, and perſue pleaſure in the way which *God* and *nature* have pointed out to them; that is, would *moderately perſue* and *temperately enjoy* the good things of this world, and would ſo *mix* and *reſtrain* their enjoyments,

enjoyments, as that one kind, or one inſtance, ſhould not break in upon, but heighten the pleaſures which ariſe from the other kinds, or the other inſtances of enjoyment; this would naturally tend to preſerve in them a *healthy* conſtitution, *ſoundneſs* of mind, *calmneſs* in their paſſions, *quickneſs* in their affections, and a *reliſh* for every kind of pleaſure; and when they thus perſue their *own happineſs*, in conjunction with the happineſs and well-being of the *reſt* of their fellow-creatures, making a ſuitable proviſion for their *offspring* and *dependents*, miniſtering aſſiſtance and ſuccour, according to their ability, to the *needy* and *diſtreſſed*, living *neighbourly* and *friendly* with all, and making the common good the common and the *grand principle* to direct their actions by; this will be a conſtant *ſpring* of pleaſure to them, which will miniſter abundantly to their *delight* and *ſatisfaction*. And as it will give them the *enjoyment* of many valuable pleaſures, which otherwiſe they would not taſte; ſo it will prevent many *evils* which otherwiſe they would be in danger of fallen into. It will cut off a great deal of *anxious* and *needleſs care*, of *burdenſome* and *afflictive toil* and *labour*, and remove the *foundation* of thoſe uneaſineſſes which many of our ſpecies groan under the weight of. In ſhort, this is the way to ſolid and laſting felicity, and the *high road* to a happy life.

Man is made a *ſocial creature*; and as he is deſigned, with all other living creatures, for happineſs, ſo he is deſigned to be happy *in* and *with ſociety*. And when he perſues his own happineſs, under a ſtrict regard to the common good, then he is in the moſt proper and likely way to obtain it. Then as he is capable of, and diſpoſed to taſte of what may give him pleaſure; ſo in his enjoyments he is the moſt free from *reluctancy*, and from

every

every thing eaſe which might be an *allay* to it. And as he prevents the *pain* and *diſorder* of body and the *uneaſineſs* of mind, which are the attendants on a *ſelfiſh* and *violent* perſuit of pleaſure; ſo the abſence of this or that kind or branch of pleaſure cannot be the ground of much *uneaſineſs* to him; becauſe as he is not violently ſet upon any enjoyment, ſo the abſence of one kind or branch of pleaſure can eaſily be ſupply'd by the preſence of another. And as he is intereſted in the *common felicity*, ſo he is a ſharer in every one's happineſs thereby; whenever he beholds the *peace*, the *plenty*, the *proſperity*, which others abound in, theſe afford *joy* and *delight* to him; and whilſt the ſelfiſh coveteous man is gnawing his tongue for pain, at the proſperity of another, who plentifully enjoys what he would *monopolize* to himſelf, but would not make uſe of; the other is ſolacing himſelf in beholding the pleaſure and ſatisfaction in life which his *neighbours* are enjoying. And tho' the troubles and afflictions which befal others will give an occaſion of *concern* to him, yet that is abundantly made up by the agreeable pleaſure, which ariſes from his *miniſtering* aſſiſtance, comfort, and relief to them. And whatever difficulties, afflictions, or diſtreſſes he may fall into, he has this ſatisfaction in himſelf that he has acted a *worthy* and a *manly* part. And as he has carefully avoided every thing which might draw upon him the *juſt enmity* of any, ſo he has taken the moſt ſure courſe, to ſecure to himſelf the *affections* and *friendſhip of all*. If he looks back upon his life paſt, this affords no remorſe or uneaſineſs of mind, but pleaſure and ſatisfaction. And, if he looks forward upon death, this gives him no forebodings of a dreadful judgment and retribution, but good hope of a *bleſſed immortality*.

Thus,

Thus, I have given a ſhort repreſentation of the true and only way to a *happy life*, wiſhing that hereby I may prevail upon thoſe of my readers, who are otherwiſe-minded, to try the experiment; and, then, I doubt not, but it will turn to account. Surely, if the men of pleaſure falſly ſo called, that is, thoſe who violently and extravagantly perſue this or that kind or branch of pleaſure; if they would but give themſelves leave to conſider the caſe; and much more, if they would but make trial, they would be convinced that the courſe they are in is not the way to *ſolid* and *laſting happineſs*; and that the way which I here recommend, and which, in truth, is the way that *God* and *nature* have provided and pointed out to them, is the high rode to a *happy life*. I am ſenſible of my inability to do *juſtice* to the ſubject before me; and what I propoſe and hope for, by this imperfect eſſay, is to ſtir up ſome more able hand to treat of it more clearly, and to repreſent it to a much better advantage, than I am capable of doing; becauſe, I think, it is a point of the utmoſt concern to mankind. For as every individual perſues happineſs for himſelf, ſo many loſe what they ſeek for, by perſuing it *only* and *wholly* for themſelves. To conclude; I obſerve, that as the love and practice of virtue is the moſt likely way to happineſs in *this life*, ſo it is the only ſure way to the happineſs of *another*. It is by our thus anſwering the great end of our creation *here*, that we effectually recommend ourſelves to the love and favour of God *hereafter*. For if we are thus faithful in the unrighteous mammon, then, God will commit to our truſt the true riches.

TRACT XXXIII.

SOME SHORT

Reflections on Virtue and Vice.

Wherein is ſhewn,

What Kind of Virtue is, in *Reaſon*, *rewardable*; and what Kind of Vice is, in *Reaſon*, *puniſhable*. Occaſioned, by Dr. *Morgan*'s Tract, entitled, A Defence of *Natural* and *revealed* Religion.

THE word *virtue*, as I have elſewhere * obſerved, is ſometimes taken in a *larger*, and ſometimes in a more *reſtrained* ſenſe. In a larger ſenſe, it includes all ſuch actions, as are in themſelves *right* and *fit*, and thereby render the agent, in the performance of them, the proper object of the *approbation* of every other intelligent being, who is qualified to diſcern the fitneſs of thoſe actions, and the unfitneſs of their contraries. And, in a reſtrained ſenſe, it includes only ſuch as are acts of *kindneſs* and *beneficence* unto others, and thereby render the agent, in the performance of them, not only worthy of the approbation, but alſo of the *Kindneſs* and *beneficence* of every other intelligent being, who is qualified to diſcern the valuableneſs of thoſe actions, and the baſeneſs of their contraries. And as virtue is thus conſidered in a larger, or in a more reſtrained ſenſe; ſo *vice* admits of the like diſtinction. And, accordingly, in the more extenſive ſenſe of the word, *vice*, all actions which, in reaſon, are *wrong* and *unfit* are ſaid to be *vicious*. Whereas, in the more reſtrained ſenſe of the word, it includes only ſuch actions as are *injurious* and *hurtful* to others, and thereby render the agent, in the performance of them, not only diſopprova-

* See my Reflections on Natural Liberty.

ble,

ble, but alſo the proper object of *reſentment* to every other intelligent being, who is qualified to diſcern the baſeneſs of thoſe actions, and the valuableneſs of their contraries. And as vice is thus differently conſidered; ſo ſome *ſelfiſh actions* are ſo far from being, in any reſpect, *vicious*, that, on the contrary, they are really *virtuous*, in the more general ſenſe of the word, *virtue*. And, therefore, in my *Diſcourſe on Virtue and Happineſs*, I did not, as it is ſaid * of me, confound together a *virtuous* and a *vicious ſelfiſhneſs*, and then argue againſt *all* ſelfiſh actions; but, on the contrary, I carefully diſtinguiſhed betwixt ſuch ſelfiſhneſs as is, in *reaſon*, *approvable*, and ſuch as his *juſtly condemnable*, as will appear from the following quotation, and likewiſe from the quotation in the ſucceeding paragraph. "If a man perſues happineſs *for himſelf*, "and prefers his *own good* to that of any other "individual, this, I think, is perfectly *juſt* and "*reaſonable*, and is what approves itſelf to the "underſtanding of every man." And whereas, in my *Diſcourſe on Virtue and Happineſs*, I laid down the following propoſition, *viz.* that *virtue is ſolely founded in benevolence*; here the term, *virtue*, I underſtood, not in the *larger*, but in the more *reſtrained ſenſe* of that word, as is moſt evident from that whole diſcourſe; wherein I referred only to ſuch actions, as are not only approvable, but alſo render the agent, upon the account of them, the proper object of *reward* to every other intelligent being, who is no ways intereſted in thoſe actions; and ſuch *rewardable goodneſs* or *virtue*, I obſerved, is ſolely founded in *benevolence*. This is what I aſſerted; and which I endeavoured to ſupport by the following reaſon, *viz.* "When "a man does hurt *to himſelf*, thro' ſome wrong "conduct, tho this would render him worthy of

* In Dr. *Morgan*'s Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion.

" *blame*, and tho' his actions ſhould be *diſſaprova-*
" *ble*; yet here is nothing which excites the *re-*
" *ſentment* of a by-ſtander, and which would ren-
" der him worthy of *correction*, upon that account.
" For as he has done *no evil* to others; ſo he can-
" not, in reaſon, deſerve any evil from them. In
" like manner, when a man does good *to himſelf*,
" how reaſonable and juſt ſoever this may be; yet
" there is nothing *valuable* in it, which merits *re-*
" *ward*, or which excites a by-ſtander to contri-
" bute to ſuch a man's felicity. For as he ſought
" *himſelf only*, in that action; ſo he cannot deſerve
" any thing from *another*, upon the account of it.
" Whereas when a man perſues the good of ano-
" ther, for that *other's ſake*; then he renders him-
" ſelf truly *lovely* and *amiable* in the eyes of others,
" and they are naturally and juſtly excited by it,
" to contribute to ſuch a man's felicity, if ability
" and opportunity concur to render them capable
" of ſo doing. For as he *generouſly* ſought the
" good of others; ſo he juſtly *merits* the love and
" ſervice of others, upon that account. " This is what I have offered, in favour of the propoſition before referred to; which reaſoning is *juſt* and *concluſive*, for any thing that as yet been ſhewn to the contrary. However, that I may make it more clear, I will inſtance in a caſe, or two, and thereby ſhew my reader that it is not the bare *fitneſs*, or *unfitneſs*, the *reaſonableneſs*, or *unreaſonableneſs* of an action, which renders the agent the proper object of *reward*, or *puniſhment*. As thus,

If it ſhould be in a man's power to enjoy *one hour's pleaſure to day*, or *two hours pleaſure to morrow*, theſe being incompatible, ſo that he cannot enjoy both; in this caſe, as the *greater good* is, in reaſon, preferable to the *leſs*; ſo it is certainly *fit* and *reaſonable*, that a man ſhould deny himſelf *one hour's* pleaſure to day, that he may enjoy *two hours* pleaſure

ſure to morrow; and to act otherwiſe would be *unfit* and *unreaſonable*. Now, ſuppoſing a man ſhould act the unreaſonable part, by giving himſelf *one* hour's pleaſure, and thereby deprive himſelf of *two*; the queſtion is, Whether ſuch a conduct renders him the proper object of *reſentment*, and, conſequently, of *puniſhment*, to a by-ſtander, when no one is a ſufferer, but the *fool himſelf*, by his folly? and the anſwer to me appears ſelf-evident: *viz.* That he is not. His weakneſs and folly, I think, render him the object of my *pity*, but not of my *reſentment*. And if I were to puniſh him for it, I cannot ſee how I could, in reaſon, be juſtified. And as, in this caſe, vice carries with it its own puniſhment; ſo, I think, in reaſon, that is all that the vicious perſon deſerves, upon account of it. On the other ſide, ſuppoſe a man acts the reaſonable part, by denying himſelf one hour's pleaſure to day, for the ſake of two hours pleaſure to morrow: Would he deſerve a *reward*, for ſo doing? No, ſurely. For as he only ſought *himſelf*, and as his virtue carries with it its own reward; ſo, I think, it is all which, in reaſon, he is entitled to. Again, ſuppoſe a man *patiently* bears the evil which it is not in his power to remove; this is certainly *right* and *fit*, becauſe it renders the affliction ſo much the *lighter*; but, then, does a man deſerve to be *rewarded*, for making his affliction eaſy to himſelf? Surely, no. The caſe is the ſame with all *ſelfiſh virtues*; for where men ſolely ſeek *themſelves*, I cannot ſee how they can, in reaſon *merit*, that is, deſerve any thing from others, upon account of it. And as it is not ſelfiſh, but *benevolent virtue* only, which is, in reaſon, *rewardable*; ſo it is not all vice, but only ſuch as is *injurious* and *hurtful* to others, which is, in reaſon, *puniſhable*.

All reward is the produce of *gratitude*, that is,

it is returning to a perſon that *good*, which he has kindly and generouſly communicated to others. So that where there is no good *communicated*, nor *intended* to be communicated, there is no foundation for gratitude or reward. Whether we ourſelves are ſharers in the good communicated, or not, it alters not the caſe, any otherwiſe than as the obligation to be grateful riſes *higher*, and becomes *ſtronger*, when we ourſelves receive the communicated good, than when it is received by others, we being obliged, in reaſon, to be grateful in both caſes. He, who *kindly* uſes others, deſerves *kind uſage* from all, and, conſequently, from us, whether we have been ſharers in his kindneſs, or not. Whereas he, who is only kind to himſelf, does not lay any obligation upon others to be kind to him, upon that account. The caſe is the ſame in *publick rewards*, which are no other than *publick gratitude*. He, who has been beneficial to the *commonwealth*, deſerves a grateful return of *kindneſs* from the publick, which, in other words, we call *reward*; whereas he, who has only been kind to himſelf, cannot, in reaſon, have any title to it. Again,

All puniſhment is the produce of *reſentment*, that is, it is returning to a perſon that *evil*, which he has unkindly and unreaſonably communicated to others; ſo that where there is no evil *communicated*, nor *intended* to be communicated, there is no foundation for reſentment, or puniſhment. Whether we ourſelves, or others, have ſuffered that evil, it alters not the caſe, any otherwiſe than as the reſentment riſes *higher*, and grows *ſtronger*, when we ſuffer in our own perſons, than when the communicated evil is ſuffered by others; the *ground* and *reaſon* of reſentment, and, conſequently, of puniſhment being the ſame in both caſes. He, who uſes another *ill*, deſerves *ill uſage* from all, and, conſequently, from us, whether we have been

been ſufferers by him, or not. Whereas he, who has only injured himſelf, does not hereby render himſelf the proper object of reſentment to others, upon that account. The caſe is the ſame in *publick puniſhment*, which is no other than the produce of *publick reſentment*; he, who has been *injurious* to the commonwealth, deſerves publick *correction*; whereas he, who has only been hurtful to himſelf, cannot, I think, deſerve ill uſage from the publick, upon that account. Upon the whole, it appears plain to me, tho' perhaps it may appear otherwiſe to others, that tho' all *virtue* is, in reaſon, *approvable*; yet all is not, in reaſon, *rewardable*. And tho' all *vice* is, in reaſon, *condemnable*; yet all is not, in reaſon, *puniſhable*. And as benevolent virtue or a doing good to others, and, in ſome inſtances, to deny ourſelves pleaſure, or to ſuffer pain, for their ſakes, without any view of advantage to ourſelves, either preſent, or future, is a proper foundation for *reward*; ſo, I think, it is founded in *reaſon*, or it is an action worthy of a *rational being*. As thus, ſuppoſing one man *denies* himſelf the enjoyment of a low degree of pleaſure, or chuſes to undergo a low degree of pain, for a very ſhort ſpace of time, thereby to remove from another a violent fit of the *gout*, or *ſtone*, or the like, without any view of pleaſure or advantage to himſelf, either in this world, or in the next; in this caſe, I think, it would be not only a *kind* and *generous*, but alſo a *reaſonable action*; becauſe it appears to me, that the *end* is worthy of the *means* by which it is obtained. And if any farther enquiry ſhould be made, Wherein the reaſonableneſs of ſuch an action lies? the anſwer is, That the action beſpeaks or ſhews itſelf to be ſo; and that, in the nature of the thing, it does not admit of being ſhewn to be ſo any other way. And if, in the caſe above, the action is *reaſonable*; then, there may be other caſes in which the

chuſing to undergo *greater ſelf-denial*, or *greater* or *more durable pain*, in order to promote the good of others, without any view of advantage to one's ſelf, either preſent, or future, may be *reaſonable* alſo; tho' I grant that *benevolence* may be carried to an *extream*, and thereby become *unreaſonable*. As when a man chuſes to undergo great and durable pains himſelf, merely to procure a very low degree of ſhort-lived pleaſure to another. I do not here take upon me to point out the *bounds* of reaſonable and unreaſonable benevolence; but all that I obſerve is, that *benevolent actions* appear to be *reaſonable*, tho' there are caſes in which, when it is carried to an *extream*, they appear to be *otherwiſe*. And as benevolent virtue is founded in reaſon; ſo it is likewiſe *practicable* to a rational being; that is, ſuch a being, when an opportunity offers of doing good to another, is capable of doing it, purely for that other's ſake, without any view of pleaſure or advantage to himſelf. I ſay, he is capable of acting ſuch a part; becauſe the good of another is a *proper motive* or reaſon of action to a rational being. And this, I think, is the caſe of *men*, who are not only capable, but do, I think, even the moſt ſelfiſh of them, in ſome inſtances, purſue the good of others, without any regard to their own good, whether preſent, or future. And tho', in ſuch inſtances, pleaſure will *attend* benevolent actions; yet that pleaſure is only the reſult of, but not the motive to, or the ground and reaſon of thoſe actions. The motive to and the conſequence of an action are as *diſtinct* and *different*, as two things can be; and the want of diſtinguiſhing betwixt theſe ſeems to be the foundation of men's *errors*, in the preſent caſe. One man by an action intends to do *good* to another, and, if the action has that effect, it will give *pleaſure* to the agent; but, if it has a contrary

contrary effect, and does *harm* to that other, then, it will give *pain* to the agent. Here we ſee that the effect and reſult of the action are different, tho' the motive to action is the ſame. And if it ſhould be urged, that as pleaſure reſulted to the agent, in the former caſe; therefore, *pleaſure* was the *motive* to action; then, it may, with equal reaſon, be urged on the other ſide, that as *pain* reſulted from the action to the agent, in the latter caſe; therefore, *pain* was the *motive* to that action. I ſay, the reaſoning is equally as juſt, in one caſe, as in the other; tho', the truth is, it was neither pleaſure, nor pain, to the agent, but *good to another*, which was the motive to action in both caſes. And as man is capable of doing good to another, purely for that other's ſake; ſo, ſurely, ſuch *benevolent virtue* is not *too high*, *too exalted* for our *great Creator*. I ſhall not enquire, What is the *foundation* of pleaſure to God? for if, as is ſuppoſed, it reſults from his *doing good*, it will not follow that *ſelfiſhneſs* is the principle of action in him, when he does ſo. The *reaſonableneſs* of an act is certainly a *proper motive* to action to a rational being; and the queſtion ariſing from hence is, whether the reaſonableneſs of doing good to another ariſes from the *action itſelf*, conſidered as *doing good to another*, abſtractedly from the effect it has upon the *agent*, in giving him pleaſure? or whether it ariſes from the *pleaſure* which accrues to the *agent*, conſidered abſtractedly from the good which is done to the other thereby? If the former be the caſe, then, to do good to another, for that other's ſake, under proper circumſtances, is a proper *motive* to action to every rational being; and, therefore, it is ſo to the moſt rational being, even the *God* and *Father* of us all. But if the latter be the caſe, *viz.* that the reaſonableneſs of doing good to another ariſes from the pleaſure, which accrues to the agent thereby; then, it will follow that, if doing

harm

harm to another will produce that pleaſure, doing harm to another is a *reaſonable action*. And, from hence, will ariſe another queſtion, *viz.* If the reaſonableneſs of an action ariſes from the pleaſure, which accrues to the agent thereby; then, how comes the *doing good*, rather than *harm* to another, to be the ground and foundation of *pleaſure* to God? If it ſhould be ſaid, that there is not any thing in nature which diſpoſes God to take pleaſure in doing one, rather than the other; and that it depends upon his arbitrary will and pleaſure. Then, I ſay, that all his creatures are in a very *unſafe* condition, becauſe tho' he may take pleaſure in doing them good *to-day*, yet he may take the like pleaſure in doing them harm *to-morrow*; which is a very *uncomfortable* conſideration, and, therefore, I hope, it is not the *truth* of the caſe. But if it ſhould be ſaid, that there is a *real difference* in the actions themſelves, antecedent to any *effect* they may have upon the agent, which is the truth of the caſe, and that God takes pleaſure in doing good, rather than in doing harm, becauſe the former is a *valuable*, *generous*, and *rational action*; whereas the latter is *baſe*, *mean*, and *unreaſonable*, and, therefore, cannot be the *ground* of pleaſure to him. Then, I ſay, that the valuableneſs, goodneſs, and reaſonableneſs of an action is a *proper motive* to a rational being to perform that action, as well as a proper foundation for the *pleaſure* which reſults from it. And that, when God does good to others, it is *benevolence*, and not ſelfiſhneſs, which is the ſpring or principle of action in him; it is the *goodneſs* of the action, which is the *motive* to his doing good, as well as the foundation of that *pleaſure*, which accrues to him in ſo doing. I will conclude this argument with obſerving to my reader, that to conſider *ſelfiſhneſs*, as the ſole principle of action in *God*, is paying but a *mean compliment* to the great Author of the Univerſe.

TRACT

TRACT XXXIV.

SOME SHORT

REFLECTIONS

On the Grounds and Extent of *Authority* and *Liberty*, with Reſpect to *Civil Government*: Wherein the Authority of Civil Governours, in Matters of Religion, is particularly conſidered. Occaſioned by Dr. *Rogers*'s *Vindication* of the *Civil Eſtabliſhment* of *Religion*.

BEFORE I proceed to what I propoſe, I think it proper to premiſe two or three things, with reſpect to the grounds and foundation of argument. As, *firſt*, that good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error, ariſe from, and are founded in the nature of things, and, conſequently, are what they are, *viz.* good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error, antecedent to, and independent of the opinion or determination of any perſon, or perſons, concerning them. And, therefore, in reaſon, the opinion or determination of any man, or body of men, ought not to be admitted, as a foundation for argument, with reſpect to them. Again,

Secondly, In reaſon, no principle, no propoſition, or action, ought to be chargeable with any conſequences, but what are the natural reſult or produce of ſuch principle, propoſition, or action. And, therefore, if unnatural conſequences are at any time preſumed to attend any principle, propoſition, or action, and if arguments are founded upon ſuch preſumptive conſequences, and concluſions are drawn, tho' never ſo juſtly,

ly, this is fallacious, and, in reaſon, ought not to be admitted. As thus: Suppoſing I was perſuaded of the truth of this propoſition, *viz.* that bleeding, in all caſes, is very injurious to the health and the conſtitutions of men; and this induced me to declare to others that propoſition in the moſt publick manner; and likewiſe to declare the grounds and reaſons upon which I aſſented to it, and which, I judged, were evidences from which the truth of that propoſition would moſt manifeſtly appear; and if, in ſuch a caſe, any man ſhould preſume that breaking the publick peace and diſorder in ſociety would be the conſequence of ſuch a publication, this conſequence would be unnatural, and, therefore, in reaſon, ought not to be admitted; as a foundation for argument; becauſe that publication has no natural tendency to produce it. It is not enough to ſay in this caſe, that, in *ſome inſtances*, breaking the publick peace and diſorder in ſociety have attended men's publiſhing their opinions freely, as aforeſaid; becauſe theſe are not the natural produce of ſuch a *publication*, but of *private intereſt*, *miſguided zeal*, and the like; and of the turbulent and diſorderly *paſſions* of men, which are ſometimes raiſed by the moſt inoffenſive and virtuous actions. Chriſt publiſhed his moſt benevolent and peaceful goſpel to the world; this gave occaſion for alarming the turbulent paſſions of men, and much diſorder followed upon it. But, then, that diſorder cannot, in reaſon, be charged upon the publication of the goſpel, becauſe it had no natural tendency to produce ſuch conſequences, but the contrary. And, therefore, no argument ought, in reaſon, to be admitted, which is founded upon ſuch unnatural conſequences. Again,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, In all points of *moral* conſideration, there muſt be ſome evident principle of reaſon to be the ground and foundation of all argumentation on ſuch ſubjects; or, at leaſt, in thoſe caſes where there may be ſome things *preſumed* and *ſuppoſed*, there muſt be a high degree of probability to juſtify and warrant ſuch *preſumptions* and *ſuppoſitions*. And, therefore, where ſuch probability is wanting, preſumptions and ſuppoſitions ought not, in reaſon, to be admitted, as a foundation for argument. As thus, it is highly reaſonable that all men ſhould be good and virtuous. But, then, this will not afford a proper foundation for *preſuming* and *ſuppoſing* that all men are ſo, ſeeing they are not only liable to be otherwiſe, but likewiſe experience ſhews that it is not generally their caſe. Again, it is highly reaſonable, that all thoſe, who have the reins of government in their hands, ſhould make the common good the governing principle of their actions, throughout their adminiſtration. But, then, this does not afford a proper foundation for *preſuming* and *ſuppoſing* that all governours act thus; ſeeing they are not only liable to act otherwiſe, but likewiſe experience ſhews that many of them have done ſo. And, therefore, in argument, no reaſonings or concluſions ought to be admitted, which are founded upon ſuch groundleſs principles. And becauſe this is a way of reaſoning which is fallacious, and, when it is artfully managed, it may and often does miſlead; therefore, I ſhall give another inſtance of ſuch groundleſs *preſumptions* and *ſuppoſitions*, and thereby more fully illuſtrate the point I have now under conſideration. As thus, man, by his natural frame and compoſition, is liable to neglect, or abuſe, his faculties; and, conſequently, all men are liable to be thieves, drunkards, murderers, and the like. But, then, this will not

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be a proper foundation for *preſuming* and *ſuppoſing* that all, or that the generality of men, will be thieves, drunkards, murderers, *&c.* except ſome poſitive religious inſtitutions are eſtabliſhed to reſtrain them. Poſitive religious inſtitutions leave men, as they find them, in this reſpect; that is, men's natural abilities, their natural tempers and conſtitutions, their appetites and paſſions, and whatever are the ſprings of action in them, and the natural conſciouſneſs of the good, or evil, of thoſe actions, are the ſame, both with and without ſuch poſitive religious inſtitutions. And, conſequently, the *probability* and the *preſumption* ariſing from it lie on the other ſide of the queſtion; that is, it may fairly be *preſumed*, that men would generally be what they are, drunkards, or ſober; honeſt, or diſhoneſt; virtuous, or vicious; both with and without ſuch poſitive religious inſtitutions. This, I think, is farther evident from experience; men, who are diſpoſed to follow their vicious inclinations, do ſo, notwithſtanding their being under ſuch religious eſtabliſhments. And, therefore, to *preſume* that all others would be alike, or more vicious, were it not for the *eſtabliſhment* of ſome religious poſitive inſtitutions, is a *groundleſs ſuppoſition*, which has nothing in reaſon, or experience, to ſupport it. Add to this, that poſitive religious inſtitutions cannot poſſibly lay men under any reaſonable reſtraint, which natural religion does not lay them under. And, therefore, all argument and reaſoning, founded upon ſuch *preſumptions* and *ſuppoſitions*, ought not, in reaſon, to be admitted.

Theſe things being premiſed, I obſerve that, in order to proceed fairly, and to reaſon juſtly and concluſively, upon the ſubject under conſideration, I think, it will be proper to enquire into the *ground* and *reaſon* upon which *ſociety* and *government*

vernment is founded; and into the *end* and *purpoſe* which aſſociation is deſigned to obtain; and likewiſe into the *nature* of that *relation* which governors ſtand in to their people; and, from hence, I preſume, there will unavoidably ariſe ſome evident principle of reaſon, which will be a proper foundation for all farther arguments and reaſonings upon the point in hand.

Man's natural frame and compoſition, and his ſituation and condition in the world, ſhew that he is deſigned and conſtituted for ſociety, and to be happy in, and with it; and he is hereby naturally and unavoidably led into it. His natural affections diſpoſe him to ſociety; his natural ability to convey his ideas to others by ſpeech, the figure and parts of his body, and the endowments of his mind, qualify him for it; his indigence and dependence upon others, as being unable, in a ſingle capacity, to procure the comforts, or guard againſt the evils of life, neceſſitate or force him into ſociety; and his underſtanding ſhews him the fitneſs and reaſonableneſs of ſo doing. And as man is thus naturally led into ſociety, or to conſtitute a publick intereſt, which is the ſame thing; ſo, in reaſon, he has a right to claim from ſociety protection from thoſe injuries he is liable to, and which, in his ſingle capacity, he is not qualified to guard againſt; and likewiſe to claim that aſſiſtance from ſociety, which his particular neceſſities call for, and which ſociety is capable of, and, in reaſon, ought to afford him. I ſay, every individual, from the *ground* and *reaſon*, the *end* and *purpoſe* of aſſociation, muſt, in reaſon, have a right to claim thus much from ſociety; and, conſequently, the ſociety muſt, in reaſon, be obliged to afford ſuch aſſiſtance and protection to him. And as each individual is thus naturally intereſted in ſociety, ſo each individual comes under *natural*

tural obligations to it; that is to ſay, each individual is, in reaſon, obliged to afford his proportion of aſſiſtance and protection to ſociety, and thereby to each individual, according to their neceſſities and dangers, and which in like circumſtances he would, in reaſon, have a right to claim from them. And he is likewiſe, in reaſon, obliged not to be injurious or hurtful to ſociety; and, conſequently, not to miniſter that injury or harm to any individual, which he in like circumſtances ought, in reaſon, to be protected from. And as man is under *natural obligations* to ſociety; as aforeſaid, ſo he ought, in reaſon, to be anſwerable to ſociety for the diſcharge of them; that is, each individual ought, in reaſon, to be obliged or compelled, if he does not do it voluntarily, to afford his ſhare of aſſiſtance and protection to the ſociety; and to be *reſtrained* from being injurious and hurtful to it; or, rather, to be *corrected* and *puniſhed*, whenever he is ſo. I ſay, this ought, in reaſon, to be the caſe, becauſe it is the very *bond* of ſociety, and is abſolutely neceſſary to anſwer the *end* and *purpoſe* of aſſociation. For if the ſociety may not, in reaſon, *force* or *compel* each individual to afford his ſhare of aſſiſtance and protection to it; and if each individual is at *liberty* to hurt and injure each other; and the ſociety may not, in reaſon, *correct* and *reſtrain* him, then, the end of aſſociation is *deſtroyed*, or, rather, the ſociety itſelf is *loſt* and *gone*. And as the ſociety is naturally and neceſſarily inveſted with a power to *oblige*, or *reſtrain*, each individual to do, or avoid, what each individual is, in reaſon, obliged to do, or avoid, voluntarily, without ſuch compulſion; ſo the *authority* of the one, and the *duty* of the other, is *limited* and *determined* by the *ground* and *reaſon*, the *end* and *purpoſe* of aſſociation. Society is not a matter of choice or election to man; but

but he is, by his conſtitution and condition in life, naturally and neceſſarily *led* into it; but, then, his duty to the particular ſociety of which he is a member, and the authority it has over him, are to be deduced from the end of aſſociation. And as he is, in reaſon, obliged, from the *ground* of aſſociation, not to be injurious or hurtful to the ſociety, but to miniſter his proportion of aſſiſtance and protection to it; ſo the ſociety, from the *ſame ground* of aſſociation, is inveſted with authority to oblige him to the one, and reſtrain him from the other. But, then, that authority can, in reaſon, be extended only to thoſe things in which the *publick* is *intereſted*; the *publick good* being the ground and reaſon, and the end and purpoſe of ſuch aſſociation. So that the ſociety can, in reaſon, have no *demand* upon any individual, but in thoſe caſes in which it is for the *publick good*; nor lay a *reſtraint* upon any individual, but in thoſe caſes wherein the *publick* is *injured*.

As for *original contracts*, I think, the ſuppoſition is needleſs. It is true, ſocieties do conſult and come to agreements, with reſpect to the *perſon*, or *perſons*, in whoſe hands the *authority*, which reſides in them, ſhall be lodged; and in what *way* and *manner* it ſhall be exerciſed; and the like. But, theſe, I think, are not conſidered, as original contracts. However, whether there were ſuch contracts, or not, the caſe is the ſame; becauſe the authority which ariſes to, and is lodged in ſociety, muſt, in reaſon, be *extended to*, and *bounded by* the *end* and *purpoſe*, the *ground* and *reaſon* of aſſociation; which, as I obſerved, is the publick good, *viz.* that each individual may be protected and defended from injury and wrong, and may receive ſuch aſſiſtance, as their neceſſities call from each other. And

As authority in ſociety naturally and neceſſarily

ariſes from, and is bounded by the ground and reaſon, the end and purpoſe of aſſociation; ſo the nature of the thing requires that it be lodged in the hand of ſome perſon, or perſons, for the due adminiſtration thereof; becauſe otherwiſe ſociety would be a *Babel* of confuſion, and the end and purpoſe of aſſociation could not be anſwered. Authority thus exerciſed, in the making and executing of laws, is in common language called *government*; and thoſe, who are intruſted with that power, are called *governours*. Whether the authority of the ſociety be primarily lodged in *one* hand, or in *many*, for the exerciſe thereof, it alters not the caſe; becauſe the authority, thus lodged, is the ſame in *both* caſes. Thoſe who are *primarily* inveſted with the authority, which reſides in ſociety, are called *ſupreme governours*; becauſe the power of making and executing laws, for the good of ſociety, is primarily lodged in their hands; and all thoſe who are employed under them, for the due adminiſtration thereof, are called *ſubordinate governours*, becauſe the meaſure of authority they are inveſted with is delegated to them from the other.

So that *governours*, *namely*, thoſe who are *ſupreme*, are the *truſtees*, the *repreſentatives*, and the *guardians* of ſociety. They are the *truſtees*, becauſe the ſociety *entruſts* them with the execution of their authority; that is, with a power to uſe the ſtrength and wealth of the ſociety for its good, and as its exigences ſhall require. Again, *Governours* are the *miniſters* and *repreſentatives* of ſociety; becauſe the authority, which they exerciſe, is the authority which ariſes from the aſſociation, and is thereby lodged in ſociety; and governours *repreſent* the ſociety in the exerciſe of it, juſt as *ſubordinate governours* are the *miniſters* and *repreſentatives* of the *ſupreme*, whom they derive their authority

rity from, and *repreſent* their principals in the exerciſe of it. Again, Governours are the *guardians* of ſociety, as the *truſt*, lodged in their hand, is to be employed for the *publick good*, *namely*, to *protect* and *defend* every individual from all injuries and harm, whether in their perſons, their characters, or properties; to ſecure to them the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of every thing they have a right to; and to afford them that aſſiſtance which each one's neceſſitous circumſtances may, in reaſon, call for. And, in theſe views, I think, the relation, which governours ſtand in to ſociety, is moſt fully exemplified. And

As governours are the *truſtees* of the ſociety, ſo they cannot, in reaſon, employ the ſtrength or wealth of it, to any other purpoſe than the ſociety's *good*; becauſe, when it is any otherwiſe employed, it is acting contrary to that *truſt*; and, therefore, cannot, in reaſon, be *juſtified*. It is true, governours may *err*, and may act for the *hurt* of the ſociety, when they *thought* and *intended* it for their *good*; but, then, tho' their error, and their conduct founded upon it, would be ſo far *excuſable*, as that the actor ought not, in reaſon, to be *conſidered*, as injurious to the ſociety, ſeeing he intended the contrary, provided he took care to be rightly informed, according to his ability and opportunity for ſuch information, and as the circumſtances of the caſe did require; yet, as the ſociety is injured hereby, ſuch conduct is in itſelf *wrong* and *evil*, tho' the *actor* is excuſable, as aforeſaid. And tho' error, in the *circumſtances* abovementioned, would, in reaſon, be the governour's *excuſe*; yet he cannot, in reaſon, be *excuſed* and *juſtified*, when that is *not* his caſe; becauſe the ſtrength and wealth of the ſociety are a *truſt* lodged in his hand, to be employed to anſwer the *end* and *purpoſe* of aſſociation; and, therefore, he

is, in reaſon, *obliged* to employ them to anſwer that purpoſe. And, if he employs them *otherwiſe*, it is acting contrary to that truſt; eſpecially if the ſociety have *remonſtrated* to their governours, and ſhewed them the *unfitneſs* of their conduct, or of thoſe laws by which the ſociety is *injured*; or their *ſtrength* or *treaſure* waſted. I ſay, when governours have been thus remonſtrated to, their conduct is then ſo much the more inexcuſable; which remonſtrance each individual muſt, in reaſon, have a right to make, becauſe each individual is a part of that ſociety, who lodged the truſt in the governour's hand, and who are intereſted in the truſt which they abuſe; and becauſe his weal or woe depends upon the weal or woe of that ſociety, of which he is a part, and whoſe truſt is abuſed. Surely, nothing can be more extravagantly unreaſonable or abſurd, than to ſuppoſe that a ſociety hath not a right to remonſtrate to its governours, when it is abuſed by them, or to redreſs its grievances, when they grow ſo heavy, as to fruſtrate the end of aſſociation. All *truſtees* are, in reaſon, anſwerable to their principals; and if it were otherwiſe in the preſent caſe, the end and purpoſe of aſſociation would be deſtroy'd; liberty would not be ſecured, but would be changed into ſlavery; and, the publick intereſt into the perſonal property of the governour; that is, the publick good, which is the ground of aſſociation, would not, upon the preſent ſuppoſition, be ſecured; the ſociety would be deſtitute of all authority; it would be abſolutely ſubjected to the will of another; and it would be deſtitute of all relief; which ſtate is not a ſtate of liberty, but ſlavery; and the publick ſtrength and treaſure would be abſolutely at the diſpoſal of the *governour*; which would make it not a *publick intereſt*, but the governour's *perſonal property*. All which

which are exceedingly *unreaſonable* and *abſurd*; and, therefore, the ſuppoſition is groundleſs. Again,

As governours are the *miniſters* and *repreſentative* of ſociety, ſo their authority cannot poſſibly be extended *farther*, or riſe *higher* than the authority of the ſociety from which it is derived; as the *ſtream* cannot poſſibly riſe higher then the *fountain* from which it flows. So that if governours, in any inſtances, either in the *making*, or in the *execution* of *laws*, exerciſe ſuch power, as is not naturally devolved upon them *from the ſociety*, this is what, in reaſon, they have no *right* to. This is ſuch power as was not in their *principles*, and, therefore, cannot poſſibly be derived from them; and, conſequently, the exerciſe of ſuch power cannot, in reaſon, be *juſtified*. For as the power or authority of ſociey is *limited* and *bounded* by the ground and reaſon, the end and purpoſe of aſſociation; ſo, of neceſſity, the authority of their *repreſentatives* muſt be limited and determined by theſe alſo. Again,

As governours are the *guardians* of the ſociety; ſo their authority is *confined* to the *care of it*, and cannot, in reaſon, be extended farther. *Guardianſhip*, in the nature of the thing, confines the *guardian* to uſe and employ the *power* and *wealth* which ariſes to him from that *guardianſhip*, in the *uſe* and *ſervice* of thoſe he is a *guardian* to; and to ſerve ſuch purpoſes as his *guardianſhip* requires. And as governours are the *guardians* of the *happineſs* of the ſociety, ſo their authority is hereby naturally and neceſſarily *limited* to thoſe things, in which the ſociety is *intereſted*; and, if they extend their authority farther, they cannot, in reaſon, be *juſtified*. The ground and reaſon, the end and purpoſe of aſſociation, do not require or make it neceſſary, that the liberty of any individual ſhould be *abridged* or *reſtrained*, but in thoſe

caſes in which the *good* or *hurt* of ſociety is concerned. And, therefore, the *guardians* of ſociety have no right, by virtue of that *guardianſhip*, to exerciſe their authority in any other caſe. Aſſociation does not ſuppoſe a *reſtraint* of liberty in *all caſes*, but only in *ſuch caſes* in which the *publick intereſt* is concerned. And, therefore, every man has an undoubted natural right to *uſe* and *enjoy* his liberty in *all* other caſes, except he is, in reaſon, obliged to reſtrain himſelf from ſome other conſideration, notwithſtanding ſuch aſſociation. And if the guardians of the ſociety ſhould *reſtrain* that liberty, or *puniſh* men for the uſe of it, which comes to the ſame thing, their conduct could not, in reaſon, be *juſtified*. And if governours ſhould *think* themſelves obliged, in conſcience, to reſtrain men's liberty, as aforeſaid; yet ſuch reſtraint would be unreaſonable, and, therefore, unjuſtifiable. For as a late ingenious * author very juſtly obſerves, "What is one man's right, another man's conſcience cannot oblige him upon any juſt grounds to oppoſe."

Thus I have taken the view of the *ground* and *reaſon*, of the *end* and *purpoſe* of *aſſociation*, and of *government*, as ariſing from, and founded upon it; and likewiſe of the *nature* of that relation which *governours* ſtand in to their *people*; preſuming this affords ſome evident principle of reaſon, which will be a proper foundation for all farther arguments and reaſonings upon the point in hand. I have before obſerved, that no reaſonings or concluſions ought to be admitted in argument, which are founded upon *groundleſs* and *uncertain* principles; and, therefore, I humbly recommend it to be conſidered, whether thoſe principles, which I have laid down, are well grounded, or not. If they are *not*, let that be ſhewn; and it will follow that

* Dr. *Roger*'s Civil Eſtabliſhment of Religion, Page 141.

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no arguments ought to be founded upon, nor concluſions drawn from them; and that, in reaſon, they ought to be diſcarded. But if thoſe principles are well grounded; then, I think, they are a proper foundation for argument, and for the determining ſuch queſtions as the ſubject affords.

Having thus conſidered the *ground* and *reaſon*, the *end* and *purpoſe* of *aſſociation*, and likewiſe the nature of that relation which governours ſtand in to their people; I now proceed to build upon this foundation. I ſhall not enter into every queſtion which the ſubject may be liable to; but only conſider, whether civil governours have any authority in matters of religion; and, if they have, then, how far that authority is extended? And, here it will be proper to fix the notion of the term, *religion*, and ſhew what idea is annexed to it; for otherwiſe all arguings and diſputings, about *religion*, may be but beating the air. By the term, *religion*, I underſtand that which is conſidered, as the ground of divine acceptance, and which does, or is ſuppoſed to render men truly acceptable and well-pleaſing to God. So that whatever different opinions men may have about the ground of divine acceptance; yet, I think, they agree in this, that whatever is judged to be the foundation of God's favour, that is eſteemed and called *religion*. And, conſequently, when any action is, or is ſuppoſed to render men acceptable, or diſpleaſing, to God, that action is, upon that account, conſidered, as *religious*, or *irreligious*. This, I think, is the moſt general ſenſe of the term, *religion*. For tho' ſome men may confine *religion* to thoſe things, wherein the honour and ſervice of God is directly and immediately concerned, and the like; yet theſe are conſidered, as the ground of God's acceptance, and their contraries, as the ground of

his diſpleaſure. So that *religion*, in any limited ſenſe of the word, comes under the general definition I have given of it above. But farther,

An action may come under a twofold conſideration, *viz. civil* and *religious*; that is, it may be ſuch in which the good, or hurt, of ſociety is concerned; and, in this view, I call it a *civil* action; and it may be ſuch as renders the actor the proper object of *divine favour*, or *diſpleaſure*, or may be judged to do ſo; and, in this view of it, I call it a *religious* action. If there are any actions in which ſociety is not intereſted, and which render the actor the proper object of *divine* favour, or diſpleaſure, or are judged to do ſo, ſuch come only under the denomination of *religious* or *irreligious* actions; and are *not* of *civil* conſideration, becauſe ſociety is not intereſted in, nor concerned with them. If thereare any actions in which *ſociety* is intereſted, and the actor does not thereby become the proper object of *divine favour*, or *diſpleaſure*, or is not judged to do ſo, ſuch come under the denomination of *civil actions* only; and if there are any actions in which ſociety is not intereſted, and with which the favour, or diſpleaſure, of *God* is not concerned, or is not judged to be ſo, ſuch actions are neither *civil*, nor *religious*, but are of an *indifferent* nature, with reſpect to them both. So that the actions, which come into the preſent queſtion, are thoſe which are conſidered, as *religious*, *viz.* ſuch as are of *religious* conſideration only, and likewiſe ſuch as are both *civil* and *religious*. And, with reſpect to the latter, the queſtion is, Whether the *truſtees*, the *repreſentatives*, and the *guardians* of ſociety, have any authority, with reſpect to ſuch actions, as they are *religious*, and under that conſideration. That they have, as thoſe actions are of *civil* conſideration, is allowed; becauſe, in that view of them, *ſociety* is intereſted in them. And, there-

therefore, *governours* have, in reaſon, a right to oblige each individual to, or reſtrain him from the performance of ſuch actions, as the good, or hurt, of ſociety is affected by them.

This, then, I think, is the ſtate of the caſe, *viz.* Whether the *guardians* of ſociety have any right, by virtue of that *guardianſhip*, to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual to, or from the performance of any action, upon account of its being ſubſervient to render the actor pleaſing, or diſpleaſing, to God; or to his being happy, or unhappy, in another world? Barely to affirm, or deny, in the preſent caſe, is not to argue, but to dogmatize. And, therefore, ſuch affirmation, or denial, muſt be ſhewn to be founded on ſome evident principle of reaſon, to render it of weight in the preſent queſtion. I think that the *negative* ſide of this queſtion is the truth of the caſe; *viz.* that *governours* have *no authority* in matters of religion; that is, they have no right to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual to, or from the performance of any action, upon account of that action's being ſubſervient to render the actor pleaſing, or diſpleaſing, to God; or to his being happy, or unhappy, in another world. My reaſon is as follows: The *ground* and *reaſon* of *aſſociation* to men is not their relation to, and dependence upon God; but only their relation to, and dependence upon each other. And the ultimate end and purpoſe of aſſociation is not to ſecure to each individual the *favour* of *God*, and the happineſs of *another world*, but only to procure to each individual thoſe comforts in life, which each, in a ſingle capacity, are not qualified to procure to themſelves; and to guard and protect each individual from thoſe evils, which each, in a ſingle capacity, are not qualify'd to ſecure themſelves from. Men do not aſſociate or conſtitute a publick intereſt, becauſe each, in a ſingle

a ſingle capacity, are not qualified to obtain *God's favour* and the happineſs of *another world*; or that *ſociety*, and, conſequently, the *repreſentatives* of it, ſhould give, or ſecure, thoſe advantages to them: I ſay, theſe cannot poſſibly be the ground and reaſon, the end and purpoſe of aſſociation, becauſe, with reſpect to them, aſſociation does not alter the caſe at all. The favour of *God* and the happineſs of *another world* are what *ſociety* can neither give, nor ſecure, nor take away from any individual; and, conſequently, theſe are things which ſociety, as ſuch, are not intereſted in, nor concerned with. Every individual muſt, in his ſingle capacity, render himſelf *perſonally* pleaſing to God, and thereby be the proper object of his preſent, or future, favour; for otherwiſe he cannot poſſibly obtain it; that is, he muſt voluntarily chuſe to do, and avoid, whatever is neceſſary to render him acceptable and well-pleaſing to his Maker; it being out of the power of any other to do it for him. And, therefore, if *governours* ſhould aſſume to themſelves a power to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual to do, or avoid, any action, as *religious*, they would hereby deſtroy the end which they propoſe to obtain. For as every *religious* action, or omiſſion, muſt have a *religious* motive to be the ground or reaſon of it; becauſe otherwiſe it would not be a *religious* action, or omiſſion; ſo when *governours* interpoſe their authority, by compelling, or reſtraining, as far as that influences, by being the *ground* or *reaſon* of ſuch action, or omiſſion, ſo far the *religiouſneſs* of that action, or omiſſion, is deſtroyed. Again, As the *favour* of *God* and the happineſs of *another world* muſt be by every individual *perſonally* obtained; ſo it is what every individual is only *perſonally* intereſted in. If any individual is intereſted in God's favour, and entitled to the happineſs of *another world*, *ſo-*

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ciety is no gainer; and, if the contrary is his caſe, *ſociety* is no loſer hereby. It is true, thoſe actions which render men the objects of God's favour, or diſpleaſure, may be beneficial, or hurtful, to ſociety; but, then, the good, or hurt, which *ſociety* receives from ſuch actions, ariſes from the actions themſelves, conſidered abſtractedly from their being pleaſing, or diſpleaſing, to *God*; and they would be equally beneficial, or hurtful, whether they be introductive to the *favour*, or *diſpleaſure*, of God, or not. So that, in this view, thoſe actions are not of *religious*, but of *civil* conſideration only.

The ſum of the preſent argument is this, *viz.* *religion* is wholly and only *perſonal*; that is, every man muſt render himſelf *perſonally* pleaſing to God; this being what *ſociety* can neither give, nor ſucure, nor take away; and it is likewiſe what ſociety is not intereſted in. If he obtains God's favour, no man is a gainer, but himſelf; and, if he loſes that favour, no one is a ſufferer, but himſelf, thereby; and, conſequently, *religion* cannot poſſibly be the *ground* and *reaſon* of aſſociation, or the *end* and *purpoſe* to which it is intended to be ſubſervient. And as the authority which reſides in ſociety, and, conſequently, in *governours*, as their *repreſentatives*, does naturally ariſe from, and is, therefore, extended to, and bounded by, the *ground* and *reaſon*, the *end* and *purpoſe* of aſſociation; ſo, from hence, it will unavoidably follow, that *governours* have *no authority* in matters of religion; that is, they have, in reaſon, no right to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual to, or from the performance of any action, upon account of that action's being pleaſing, or diſpleaſing, to God; becauſe this is ſuch power as was not in their principals, and, therefore, cannot poſſibly be derived from them.

Governours

Governours, as I have already obſerved. are the *truſtees*, the *repreſentatives*, and the *guardians* of ſociety. But as *religion* is purely *perſonal*, and in which ſociety is not intereſted in any reſpect, there cannot, therefore, poſſibly ariſe any *truſt*, to governours from ſociety, upon a *religious* account; that is, governours cannot poſſibly have a right to govern the underſtandings and actions of men, with reſpect to *religion*, upon the account of their being the ſociety's *truſtees*. And as the authority which ariſes to ſociety from the ground and reaſon, the end and purpoſe of aſſociation, cannot poſſibly be extended to matters of *religious* conſideration; ſo governours cannot poſſibly have a right to govern the underſtandings and actions of men, upon a *religious* account, by virtue of their being the ſociety's *repreſentatives*. And as the favour, or diſpleaſure, of God, and the happineſs, or unhappineſs, of *another* world, are what ſociety can neither give, nor ſecure, nor take away; ſo governours cannot poſſibly have a right to interpoſe in matters of *religion*, by virtue of their being the ſociety's *guardians*. The caſe, I think, is as plain as any thing can poſſibly be, And, therefore, if civil governours ſhould at any time interpoſe in matters of *religion*, by making laws, or executing them, when made, in order to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual, to, or from the performance of any action, upon a *religious* account; this is manifeſtly a ſtretch of power; this is what *governours*, as *governours*, have no right to; and, therefore, cannot, in reaſon, be juſtified in. Thus, I think, I have fully ſhewn that governours, as ſuch, that is, as the *truſtees*, the *repreſentatives*, and the *guardians* of ſociety, have no right to interpoſe in matters of *religion*; that is, they have no right to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual, to, or from the performance of any action, upon the account of its being

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the ground of *divine* favour, or diſpleaſure. And if governours have no authority in matters of *religion*, when the term, *religion*, is underſtood in its utmoſt latitude, as, I think, I have ſhewn they have not; then, it will follow, that governours can have *no* authority in matters of *religion*, when the term, *religion*, is underſtood in any reſtrained or limited ſenſe. To ſhew this at large may be thought needleſs, becauſe it unavoidably follows from what has been before laid down.

But becauſe I am willing to go thro' the queſtion I am now upon, and thereby prevent any exceptions it may be liable to, I will briefly examine the ſeveral *particulars* which may be conſidered, as *religion*; and theſe, I think, may be ranged under *four* heads, *namely*, *firſt*, Men's living in the practice of *virtue*, that is, their putting on ſuch a behaviour as is ſuitable to a rational and manly character, by doing to all others as they would be done by, and by rendering themſelves as agreeable, uſeful, and beneficial to the world, as their condition and circumſtances in life renders them capable of. *Secondly*, Men's paying their acknowledgments to God *in ſociety*, which is commonly called *publick divine worſhip*. *Thirdly*, Men's performing ſome *external* actions, upon a *religious* account; ſuch as *bowing the body*, &c. and which are uſually expreſſed by theſe terms, *viz. rites*, *ceremonies*, *ordinances*, *inſtitutions*, *ſacraments*, or the like. *Fourthly*, Men's *aſſenting*, and *publickly profeſſing* that aſſent, to certain propoſitions, which are commonly called *articles of faith*. Theſe are the ſeveral things which are either ſeperately, or conjunctly, conſidered, as the ground of divine acceptance, and, therefore, are called *religion*. And,

Firſt, If *religion* be conſidered, as conſiſting in the practice of *virtue*, then, the queſtion will be, What *authority governours* have in *religious* matters?

And

And the anſwer is, That they have *none at all*. For tho' *religious* actions may be beneficial to *ſociety*, and *irreligious* actions may be hurtful to it; yet the *good*, or *hurt*, which *ſociety* ſuſtains by them, ariſes from the actions themſelves, conſidered abſtractedly from the *religiouſneſs*, or *irreligiouſneſs*, of thoſe actions. And, therefore, tho' governours have authority to oblige, or reſtrain, men, with reſpect to ſuch action; yet it is not, upon account of the *religiouſneſs*, or *irreligiouſneſs*, of thoſe actions, but only on account of their being *civil* actions; that is, upon account of the actions themſelves being *beneficial*, or *hurtful*, to *ſociety*, as aforeſaid. So that *religion* does not come into the caſe at all. Again,

Secodnly, If *religion* be conſidered, as conſiſting in men's *paying their acknowledgments* to God in *ſociety*; then the queſtion will be. What authority *civil governours* have in matters of *religion?* And the anſwer will be, That they have *none at all*. I ſhall not enter into the queſtion, Whether men are, in reaſon, obliged *publickly* to pay their acknowledgments to God? it being ſufficient to obſerve, that the generality of men think they are ſo. And as men, who are thus perſuaded, muſt either come to ſome agreement among themſelves, with reſpect to the *time*, *the place*, and the *form* or *mode of worſhip*, and the *perſon* to miniſter therein, or elſe accept of what is provided for them; I ſay, one or other of theſe muſt be the caſe; for otherwiſe *publick worſhip* cannot take place. Therefore, I think, that it cannot in reaſon, be conſidered, as a *hurt* or *injury*, but a *kindneſs* and a *benefit* to ſociety, for governours to make a proviſion in theſe reſpects, that ſo each individual may have the opportunity of paying his *publick* acknowledgments to God, which the generality of men think it is their duty to do. But, then, there is nothing *authoritative* in all this, ſuppoſing men are left perfectly

feetly at liberty, which, in reaſon, every man ought to be. For as worſhipping God is a matter purely *perſonal*, with which ſociety is not concerned, or intereſted in; that is, ſociety is not *benefited*, nor *damaged*, by men's worſhipping, or not worſhipping; by their worſhipping in this or that place, at this or that time, by this or that form, &c. ſo governours cannot poſſibly have a right to oblige, or reſtrain, men in *theſe reſpects*; becauſe it is not men's relation to, and dependence upon *God*, or the good, or evil, they may receive from him, but only their relation to, and dependence upon, and the good, or evil, they may receive from *each other*, which is the ground and reaſon, and the end and purpoſe of aſſociation. And, therefore, tho' governours may ſo far interpoſe, as to appoint a *time* for publick worſhip, a *place* to perform it in, a *form* or *mode* of worſhip, and a *perſon* to miniſter in divine ſervice, theſe being not of *religious*, but of *civil* conſideration only, as the favour of *God*, and the happineſs of *another world*, do not at all ariſe from, or depend upon them; and as they are ſubſervient only to the preſent *conveniency* of *ſociety*, in their paying their *publick* acknowledgments to God, and to render their minds eaſy and quiet in ſo doing; I ſay, tho' governours may make a proviſion for *publick* worſhip, as aforeſaid; yet it will not follow, that they have a right to *oblige*, or *reſtrain*, any individual in theſe reſpects. For as man's obligations to God are purely *perſonal*, and center in *himſelf*, ſociety not coming under any obligations thereby; and as he is only anſwerable to God for the diſcharge of them, ſociety not being rewardable, or puniſhable, upon his account; ſo ſociety cannot, in reaſon, have a right of dominion over him in theſe reſpects, but ought to leave him under the moſt univerſal and unlimited toleration. And as the

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end and deſign of a ſtated *time* and *place* for publick worſhip, ſtated *forms* and *modes* of worſhip, and a ſtated *miniſtry*, is, that each individual member of ſociety may have the opportunity of paying his publick acknowledgments to God, and may have eaſe and quiet of mind in ſo doing; ſo the nature of the thing requires, that *publick ſatisfaction* ſhould be ſolely aimed at, with reſpect to them; that is, after a due regard is had to the natural and moral character of Almighty God, which publick worſhip is deſigned to expreſs, and to preſerve a juſt ſenſe of it in the minds of men, ſuch *time* and *place*, ſuch *modes* of worſhip, and ſuch a *miniſtry* ſhould, in reaſon, be provided for ſociety, as will ſuit the more general circumſtances and the more general opinions of mankind in theſe reſpects. Every governour, in the act of worſhip, is but an individual, and ſtands upon the ſame foot in that reſpect with every other individual. And, therefore, as proviſion for publick worſhip by a ſtated time, place, mode, and miniſtry, is not for *governours*, conſidered *as governours*, but for *ſociety*, and for governours, only as *parts* and *members* of it; ſo in reaſon, it is not the *particular* circumſtances or *opinions* of governours, but the more general circumſtances and opinions of *mankind*, which ſhould be the ground and reaſon, and the rule and meaſure of action, with reſpect to them. For as *publick worſhip* ought, in reaſon, to be provided for all; ſo, if poſſible, ſuch, in reaſon, ought to be uſed as may be acceptable to every individual, and thereby anſwer the end and purpoſe of worſhip to *them*. If an entertainment were to be made for a body of men, he that provides it is not to conſult his *own* particular taſte, and make that the rule of action in his proviſions; but he is to conſider what will ſuit the more general taſtes of thoſe who are to be entertained, and to provide accordingly. Again,

Thirdly, If *religion* be conſidered to conſiſt in the performance of certain *external* actions, ſuch as *bowing the body*, or the like, which actions are uſually expreſſed by thoſe terms, *viz. rites*, *ceremonies*, *ordinances*, *inſtitutions*, *ſacraments*, and the like, the queſtion will be, What authority *civil governours* have in matters of *religion?* And the anſwer will be as before, *viz.* That they have *none at all.* For as theſe are what ſociety are not intereſted in, ſo there cannot poſſibly any authority devolve up on governours from ſociety, with reſpect to them. If a man *bows*, or *omits bowing*; if he bows toward the *Eaſt*, or towards the *Weſt*, if he bows to or before *carved* or a *molton image*; or if he does, or omits doing, any or all of theſe, or any other ceremonies, ſociety is not benefited nor damaged hereby. And, therefore, governours cannot, in reaſon, have a right to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual to, or from the performance of any ſuch action, upon a *religious* account.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that *ceremonies* may be of divine inſtitution; and that, as ſuch, governours have a right to recommend the uſe of them to their people: I *anſwer*, It is allowed they have ſuch a right, it being what every individual has a right to do, as well as governours, provided it be not deſtructive of the common rights of mankind. Every man has a right to recommend to the world what he thinks will be uſeful and beneficial to it, or that will render his fellow-creatures acceptable and well-pleaſing to God: but, then, here is no *authority* exerciſed in the caſe; and as every man has a right to do, as aforeſaid, ſo it is the buſineſs of government to guard and ſecure that right to him. Again,

Fourthly, If religion be conſidered to conſiſt in *aſſenting*, and publickly *profeſſing* that aſſent, to certain propoſitions, which are commonly called

articles of faith; then the queſtion will be, Whether *civil governours* have any authority in, matters of *religion*? and the anſwer again will be as before, *viz.* That they have *none at all.* For as aſſent to, or diſſent from, any propoſition, or publickly profeſſing, or not profeſſing, ſuch aſſent, or diſſent, is neither beneficial, nor hurtful, to ſociety; ſo there cannot poſſibly any authority devolve upon governours from ſociety, with reſpect to them. If a man aſſents, or diſſents, or if he publickly profeſſes, or does not profeſs, his aſſent to, or diſſent from, the following propoſitions, *viz. God is preſcient*, as the generality of mankind hold, or, *He is not preſcient*, as ſome few hold, ſuch aſſent, or diſſent, or profeſſing, or not profeſſing, ſuch aſſent, or diſſent, does not benefit nor hurt any one individual in ſociety; and, therefore, governours, in reaſon, have no right to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual, in theſe reſpects.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that ſome propoſitions are *important* truths, and that others are *pernicious* errors; and that governours have a right to oblige their people to aſſent to the former, and diſſent from the latter. I *anſwer*, That aſſent to, or diſſent from, the truth of a propoſition, is the reſult of that evidence, or the want, or ſeeming want, of it, upon which each of them is grounded. And as aſſent, or diſſent, is purely *perſonal*, being the reſult of a man's *own* judgment, and not of *other* men's; ſo it is what governours can neither give, nor ſecure, nor take away. And as to the truth and importance of any propoſition, theſe muſt be proved to every man from ſuch evidences, as are neceſſary to determine thoſe points, of which every man is conſtituted a judge for himſelf; and, with reſpect to which, governours are not

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better judges than other men. The ground and reaſon, the end and purpoſe of aſſociation, do not require or make it neceſſary, that the ſeveral members of ſociety ſhould reſign their underſtandings and judgments up to their governours; and that governours ſhould judge, and determine for them, with reſpect to the truth, or falſeneſs, of any propoſition whatever. Beſides, governours are by no meanes qualafied for ſuch a work. Truth comes under a *twofold* conſideration, *viz.* *firſt* the truth of things. *Secondly*, a true relation of our opinions concerning them. In the *former* caſe, truth ſtands oppoſed to error, and in the *latter* to falſhood. And when one man is conſtituted a judge of what is *truth*, or *error*, to, or for, any other men, or body of men, ſo as that ſuch men, or body of men, are obliged to receive for truth, or error, whatever the other puts upon them, as ſuch; then the nature of the thing requires, that every ſuch judge ſhould have a twofold qualification, *viz. firſt*, he muſt have an *infalliable judgment* which cannot err. And, *ſecondly*, he muſt be of ſtrict *veracity*, and will not deceive. For if he is defective in either of theſe, then, he is unqualified for ſuch a work: but governours cannot ſhew, that they are poſſeſſed of thoſe qualifications, more than other men; and, therefore, they are not, in reaſon, conſtituted their judges. And if governours would be, in reality, the guardians of *truth*, then, they muſt protect and defend men in their ſearches and enquiries after it, and not correct and puniſh them when they do ſo. For as the truth of any propoſition is known to be ſuch, by the diſcernment of that evidence upon which the truth of the propoſition depends; ſo is he the greateſt friend to truth, who diſcovers and encourages the diſcovery and free examination of ſuch

evidence. And tho' this gives error the ſame advantage as truth, which in this caſe, I think, it ought, in reaſon, to have, *viz.* a fair hearing; ſeeing error aſſumes the character of truth, and, therefore, is not to be condemned, as error, 'till it is proved to be ſo upon a fair examination of the caſe; yet truth is not a ſufferer, but a gainer thereby. Becauſe it is by ſuch a free examination of the evidence, that truth is diſcover'd and known to be ſuch; juſt as in the caſe of property, which governours, *as governours*, are the *guardians* of. For when a diſpute ariſes about a *right* of *property*, then governours, as the *guardians* of *property*, are not to ſhut up every court of juſtice, in which the right of property is uſed to be tried, and ſo *bar* and *prevent* all diſputes of that kind; for, then, they would not be the *guardians*, but the *deſtroyers* of *property*; but they are to encourage and protect each party in making out their claim, by giving them full liberty to produce their evidences, and likewiſe give them a fair hearing; it being the *evidences* only, and not the *authority* of governours, which, in reaſon, ought to determine, on which ſide the right of property lies; ſo in like manner, if a diſpute ariſes about the *truth* of a propoſition, then, governours, as the *guardians* of *truth*, are not to prohibit men from, or puniſh them for publiſhing any propoſition, or the evidence they have to ſupport it, and ſo bar all diſputes of that kind: for, then, they would not be the *guardians*, but the *deſtroyers* of *truth*, by robbing it of every friend; but they are to encourage, and to protect *each party*, in making out their claim to truth; by giving them full liberty to produce their evidences; and likewiſe to let them have a fair hearin: it being the evidences only, and not the authority of governours, which, in reaſon ought

ought to determine, on which ſide of a queſtion the truth lies.

Thus, I have examin'd the ſeveral particulars which may be conſidered, as *religion*, and have ſhewn, that governours, *as governours*, that is as the *truſtees*, the *repreſentatives*, and the guardi*ans* of ſociety, have no authority, with reſpect to them. I now proceed to examine what may be urged in favour of ſuch authority, or rather, in favour of perſecution, which is the ſame thing. And,

Firſt, It may be urged, that it is reaſonable governours ſhould have authority to oblige, or reſtrain, men in thoſe caſes where God is neglected, or diſhonoured; becauſe the cauſe and intereſt of God and his honour ought to be as near and dear to them, as the cauſe and intereſt of ſociety, and therefore, ought to be guarded and defended by them. I *anſwer*, That governours ought to have a true regard for the honour and ſervice of God is allowed: it being what every individual is obliged to. But it will not follow, from hence, that they have a right to exerciſe any branch of authority which does not naturally devolve upon them from ſociety. They are to have a regard to the honour and ſervice of God: but, then, they are to manifeſt that regard, by doing what properly comes within their own province; and not by doing what, in reaſon, they have no right to. They are to encourage what is beneficial to ſociety, by beſtowing their favours on thoſe who do ſuch actions as are beneficial to it. And they are to diſcourage what is prejudicial to ſociety, by witholding their favours from, or by puniſhing thoſe who do ſuch actions, as are injurious and hurtful to it. But it will not follow, that they have a right to puniſh men for thoſe actions,

in which ſociety is not intereſted, but the contrary; becauſe no ſuch power does naturally ariſe from the ground and end of aſſociation; and therefore, ſuch power cannot be devolved upon governours from ſociety, whoſe *miniſters* and *repreſentatives* they are. But farther, we are to render to all their due; to *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar*'s, and unto *God* the things that are *God*'s. To *Cæſar*, the authority which belongs to *Cæſar*; and to God, the authority which belongs to him. Governours are the *repreſentatives* of ſociety; and, therefore, every offence, committed againſt *ſociety*, they are to correct and reſtrain. But thoſe offences, which are committed only againſt *God*, are to be left to the judgment of God, who has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, and render to every man according to his works. And, therefore, if *civil governours* ſhould take upon them to give judgment, with reſpect to theſe, this would be doing what they have no authority for. It would be judging before the time, and as it were, taking the work out of God's hand. Again,

Secondly, It may be urged, that the belief of a God, a providence, and a judgment to come, is neceſſary to the happineſs of *ſociety*; and that, as theſe are principles of religion, ſo it is neceſſary that governours ſhould oblige each individual to give ſome publick teſt of his belief of them; for otherwiſe there will be no proper foundation for that mutual truſt and confidence, which the members of ſociety ought to repoſe in each other, and without which the affairs and buſineſs of ſociety cannot be carried on. I *anſwer*, The belief of a God, a providence, and a judgment to come, doth not neceſſarily make men *beneficial* and *uſeful* to *ſociety*; and a *diſbelief* of theſe doth not neceſſarily make them *injurious* and *hurtful* to it; men's relation to, their intereſt

intereſt in, their dependance upon, and their obligations to ſociety being exactly the ſame, whether they beleive thoſe points, or not. And as it is not men's relation to, and dependence upon God, but their relation to, and dependence upon *each other*, which is the ground and reaſon of aſſociation; ſo *governours* cannot poſſibly have any authority devolved upon them from ſociety, to oblige, or reſtrain, any individual, in theſe reſpects. Beſides, aſſent, or diſſent, is not in the governour's power to give, ſecure, or take away; and, therefore, he cannot, in reaſon, have any authority, with reſpect to them. As for men's giving ſome publick *teſts* of their belief of the foremention'd points, in order to ſecure mutual confidence in ſociety, I think, that, which will be moſt effectual to anſwer this end, is a right behaviour, or, in other words, a good life. When a man, in the general courſe of his actions, behaves himſelf with uprightneſs and integrity in ſociety; this is a proper foundation for confidence in ſuch a man, that he will act thus in any inſtance, in which it is neceſſary that confidence ſhould be repoſed in him. But if a man, in the general courſe of his actions, is unfair and diſingenuous in, and to *ſociety*; then, there is not any profeſſion or declaration which he can make, that will be a proper foundation for confidence in ſuch a man. And, therefore, if he ſhould be required to attend divine ſervice, to ſubſcribe certain articles of faith, and the like, and if he ſubmits to what is thus required of him, tho' this may, and often does, ſerve as a cloak to cover his evil deſigns, yet it cannot be a proper foundation for confidence in him; becauſe his general behaviours ſhews that he is unworthy of it. In ſhort, publick teſts ſuppoſe men to be honeſt and ſincere, antecedent to the taking of them; for otherwiſe they are of no affect, and, therefore, they cannot ſerve to *prove* a

point which muſt be *ſuppoſed* and *allowed*, antecedent to ſuch proof. And as ſuch teſts are what honeſt men do not need, and what diſhoneſt and bad men will not be obliged, or reſtrained by; ſo of conſequence, they are generally but of little ſervice to ſociety. It muſt be allowed, that in thoſe caſes in which a *Theiſt* is required to give his intereſt in God's favour, for a pledge of his ſincerity, which is the caſe of ſwearing in courts of judicature; there it is highly reaſonable, that governours ſhould require from a profeſs'd *Atheiſt* a pledge of his ſincerity likewiſe, in ſomething wherein his preſent intereſt is concerned. For as this preſent life is all that he conſiders himſelf, as intereſted in, ſo he ought to ſtake ſome preſent intereſt, if ſuch a pledge can be given, in order to render his teſtimony of equal weight with the teſtimony of a *Theiſt*; for otherwiſe they ſtand upon an unequal foot; the *Theiſt*, if he proves falſe, riſques his ſafety and happineſs in *another* world; whereas the *Atheiſt*, if he gives a falſe teſtimonies, upon his own principles, runs no riſque at all. It muſt likewiſe be allow'd that the belief of a God, a providence, and a judgment to come, may have an influence upon men's behaviour towards each other, and ſo may be beneficial to ſociety. But, then, tho' this affords a reaſon for laying before unbelievers all the evidence, upon which the truth of theſe depends, and by which it may be ſhewn, in order to work their conviction; yet it cannot afford a reaſon for excluding them from ſociety, or barring them the advantages which ariſe from it, or their being uſeful and ſerviceable to it; becauſe faith and ſociableneſs, or unbelief and unſociableneſs, have no neceſſary relation to, connection with, or dependence upon each other. Again,

Thirdly and *laſtly*, It may be urged, that men's being of different opinions, with reſpect to *religion*, their

their profeſſing and *publiſhing* ſuch different opinions, with the grounds and reaſons on which they are founded, and their having different *modes* of worſhip, are ſuch publick *diſorders*, or at leaſt, they introduce ſuch diſorders in ſociety, as it is the buſineſs of governours, who are the *guardians* of *publick peace*, to correct and reſtrain. I *anſwer*, As this argument ſeems to be offered, in favour of *publick peace*, and thereby is the more likely to miſlead; and as it is the golden cup in which the deadly poiſon of perſecution is held forth, to render that evil potion the more acceptable; ſo I ſhall be the more particular, in my examination of it. *Publick peace* in ſociety, I think, conſiſts in every individual's quietly poſſeſſing and enjoying every comfort, every privilege, every advantage, every liberty, *&c.* which, in reaſon, he ought to poſſeſs and enjoy, without moleſtation; and in his not being hurt or injured in his perſon, his character, or his fortune. And *publick diſorder*, as it ſtands oppoſed to *publick peace*, I think, muſt conſiſt in barring any individual from the poſſeſſion or enjoyment of any comforts, any privilege, any advantage, any liberty, *&c.* which he ought, in reaſon, to poſſeſs and enjoy; and in the injuring any individual in his perſon, his character, or his property. And, conſequently, the *breach* of *publick peace*, and diſorder in ſociety, is greater, or leſs, in proportion to the greater or leſs number of perſons who are injured by it; and in proportion to the greater or leſs degree of injury which they ſuſtain. This being the true ſtate of the caſe, the queſtion will be, Whether men's being of *different religious* opinions, and their *profeſſing* and *publiſhing* thoſe opinion, together with the grounds and reaſons on which they ſound them, or, whether men's joining in different congregations, and uſing different modes of worſhip, be in reality, a *breach* of the *publick peace*, and ſuch a *diſorder* in

ſociety

ſociety which governours ought, in reaſon, to have a right to correct and reſtrain? And the anſwer; in this caſe, is as plain and evident, as that two and two, when added together, conſtitute the number four; *namely*, That men's being of *different religious opinions*, or their *profeſſing* or *publiſhing* thoſe opinions, together with the grounds on which they are founded, or their uſing *different modes* of worſhip, cannot poſſibly be a *breach* of the *publick peace*, or a *diſorder* in ſociety, becauſe not any individual is hereby barred from the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of any comfort, privilege, advantage, liberty, *&c.* which in reaſon, he has a right to poſſeſs or enjoy; neither is any individual hurt or injured hereby in his perſon, his character, or his fortune. And, conſequently, governours cannot poſſibly have any authority devolved upon them from ſociety, to oblige or reſtrain, any individual, in theſe reſpects.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that tho' men's *different opinions* in religion, *&c.* are not *in themſelves* breaches of the *publick peace*, and diſorders in ſociety; yet they may, and have been, in many inſtances, *introductive* to ſuch diſorders: and therefore, it is reaſonable that governours ſhould be inveſted with a power to correct and reſtrain, as well what is *introductive* to *diſorders* in ſociety, as to correct and reſtrain the *diſorders themſelves*. I *anſwer*, If this proves any thing, it proves a great deal too much. For if governours have a right to reſtrain whatever may *introduce diſorders* into ſociety, then, they have a right to put an embargo upon all human affairs; becauſe there is not any tranſaction in life, but may be *introductive* to ſuch diſorders. Numberleſs are the inſtances in which men's diſputing, about their *perſonal properties*, have *introduced* diſorders into ſociety. And, therefore, if this kind of reaſoning be juſt, then, His Majeſty ought, as he is the Guardian of publick peace, to ſhut up

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Weſtminſter-Hall, and all other *courts* of *juſtice*; and thereby bar all diſputes of *this* kind, becauſe ſuch diſputes have, in ſome inſtances, *introduced* diſorders into ſociety. Nothing, ſurely, was more kindly meant, or which naturally tended to produce better effects, then the *publication* of the *goſpel*; and yet, in ſome inſtances, it *introduced* not peace, but the ſword. It gave *occaſion* for the *father to be againſt the ſon, and the ſon againſt the father*; *for the mother to be againſt the daughter, and the daughter to be againſt the mother*; *for the mother-in-law to be againſt the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law to be againſt the mother-in-law*. But, then, it will by no means follow, that Chriſt, or his Apoſtles, ought not to have *publiſhed* the goſpel; or that the governours of thoſe times were juſtifiable, in puniſhing thoſe who did ſo: becauſe thoſe *diſorders*, in reaſon, are only chargeable upon the *diſorderly perſons*; and that too for their being *diſorderly*, and not upon any thing elſe which might accidentally be the *occaſion* of them. And, therefore, if *different* ſentiments and practices, with reſpect to religion, ſhould at any time be the *occaſion* of breaking the *publick peace* and diſorder in ſociety; then, it is the buſineſs and duty of governours not to invade or deſtroy the common rights of mankind, becauſe that would be to bring thoſe very evils upon the members of ſociety, which government was deſigned to guard and ſecure them from; but they are to *correct* the *diſorderly perſons*, and that too for their being *diſorderly*: this being the only proper expedient to prevent diſorders in ſociety, and to guard and ſecure the publick peace. So that when the diſpute aroſe at *Hamburgh*, whether the words ſhould be tranſlated *Our Father*, or *Father our* and *diſorder* in ſociety followed upon it; then, it was the buſineſs and duty of the civil governours not to bar the people from their natural

right

right of judging for themſelves, and acting according to their own judgment, with reſpect to the point in diſpute, but to *correct* and *reſtrain thoſe diſorderly* perſons, who attempted, by acts of violence, to reſtrain that liberty in each other, and thereby became *breakers* of the *publick peace*, diſorder in ſociety conſiſting not in men's different ſentiments and practices, in matters of religion, but in acts of violence towards each other; and breaking the publick peace and diſorder in ſociety always ariſing, not from a *liberty* of *diſſent*, in matters of religion, but from a reſtraint of that liberty. And tho' it may, in ſome caſes, be very imprudent for a man to exerciſe his *natural* right of *publiſhing* his religious opinions, at a time, and in a place, where the laws of the country prohibit ſuch a *publication*; and where the paſſions aud intereſt of men might diſpoſe them to put the laws in execution againſt him; yet this will not juſtify either the making, or the execution of ſuch laws. For as they are in themſelves *unreaſonable*, and are the reſult of ſuch power as governours have no right to; ſo governours cannot, in reaſon, be juſtified in the making or in the execution of them, excepting in thoſe caſes in which men's natural rights are concerned, and which governours are obliged to defend.

Thus, I have produced what may be urged, by way of argument in favour of *perſecution*, or of governours having authority, in *matters of religion*, which is the ſame thing; and have ſhewn that not any thing can fairly be concluded from it. I now proceed briefly to ſhew, how the caſe will ſtand, upon the other ſide of the queſtion; that is, upon admitting that governours have authority to direct and govern the underſtandings and actions of men in matters of religion. And the caſe I take to be this, *viz.* If governours have any authority, in mat-

matters of *religion*, then, they have *all* authority that is, they are abſolute and ſole governours of the underſtandings and actions of men, with reſpect to *religion*, in *all caſes*. For if it be reaſonable, that they ſhould have ſuch authority in *one* inſtance, then, that reaſon will hold good in *every other* inſtance; there not being any reaſon, why governours ſhould have authority in *one* inſtance; and not in *another*, And, conſequently, if there be any reaſon, for governours having any authority, in matters of *religion*, that reaſon will hold good aud conclude for *all authority*. And, on the other ſide, if it is unreaſonable, that governours ſhould be *ſole* and *abſolute* governours of the underſtandings and actions of men, with reſpect to *religion*, in *all* caſes; then, it is equally unreaſonable, that they ſhould have ſuch authority in *any* inſtance whatever; becauſe what concludes againſt ſuch authority, *in general*, will equally conclude againſt *every* part and branch of it. And, conſequently, if it is reaſonable that there ſhould be *toleration* in *ſome* caſes, that reaſon will equally conclude for the moſt *abſolute* and *unlimited toleration*, with reſpect to religion. But as religion is purely *perſonal*, that is, it muſt be *perſonally performed*, no one being capable of performing it for another, and it is wholly of *perſonal* concern, no other being a gainer, or loſer thereby, and it is what *every man* is *perſonally* anſwerable to God for; therefore, it is moſt reaſonable that *every* man ſhould be at full liberty to judge for himſelf, and govern his actions by his own judgment, in all matters pertaining thereto. And, as a learned writer * obſerves, whoſe juſt remark I have already quoted, "What "is one man's, and every man's right, another "man's conſcience cannot oblige him upon any "juſt grounds to oppoſe."

* See Dr. *Roger*'s Civil Eſtabliſhment of Religion, Page 141.

Thus,

Thus, I have gone thro' what I propoſed, and I think, have fully ſhewn, that civil governours have *no authority*, in matters of *religion*. However, if thoſe, who are otherwiſe-minded, ſhould think, that the principles; I reaſon from, are not well-grounded, or that I have not reaſoned juſtly from thoſe principles; let that be ſhewn, and I ſhall think myſelf concerned to conſider it. But if they ſhould make their appeal, not to the *underſtandings*, but to the *paſſions* of men, by endeavouring to render me contemptible; -- ſuch perſons, and ſuch reaſoning, I ſhall deſpiſe.

To conclude: Truth is what every man has a natural and an undoubted right to. By *truth*, I mean the *truth of things*, or *truth*, as it ſtands oppoſed to *error:* and, therefore, every man has a right to conviction, when he is in error; that is, he has a right to hear what others can propoſe to him, and likewiſe to propoſe his own opinions to the world together with the grounds upon which his judgment is determined in their favour. This being the only way to his conviction, becauſe it is the only way by which the weakneſs, or falſeneſs, of thoſe grounds can be diſcovered. So that if the advocates for truth and error were at full liberty to make out their claims, by producing their evidences, and by being admitted to a fair hearing truth would then have ſo much the advantage of error, that I doubt not but it would ride triumphant thro' the world.

TRACT

TRACT XXXV.

Reflections on National Puniſhments.

Wherein *two Objections*, urged againſt what is advanced, in the Author's Diſcourſe on the *Grounds* and *Extent* of authority and Liberty, with reſpect to civil *Government*, are examined. In Anſwer to a private Letter from a Gentleman.

SIR,

I Received your Letter, in which you have ſent me your thoughts on my Reflections on the Grounds and Extent of Authority and Liberty, with Reſpect to civil Government, *viz.* That what I have offered would be *concluſive*, were it not for *two* things which, you conceive, lie as *objections* againſt what I have advanced. "*Namely*, *firſt*, That many texts of ſcripture, as "well as experience, are ſuppoſed to tell us, "that a *whole ſociety* have ſuffered afflictions from "God, for that a *part* of them have neglected to "worſhip God, or for worſhipping him in a "manner not agreeable to his will, *&c.*" And you query, Whether it will not follow, that governours have a *right* to oblige, or reſtrain men, with reſpect to religious actions, ſeeing, upon the preſent ſuppoſition, ſociety is manifeſtly intereſted therein? To which you add, "*ſecondly*, That "I have allowed, that the liberty of individuals "may be *reſtrained*, in thoſe caſes in which the "*good*, or *hurt*, of the ſociety is concerned." And you query, as before, Whether it will not follow that governours ought to *abridge* the liberty of individuals, in the *affair of religion?* Upon which I obſerve, that, I think, the *ſtrength* of your *ſe-*

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cond objection ariſes from what you have *preſumed* in your *firſt*, *viz.* That God does afflict, or puniſh, *ſocieties* of men, for the omiſſions, or actions, of *ſome individuals*; which actions, or omiſſions, are *not injurious* to the ſociety any other way, than as they *induce Almighty God* to correct and puniſh it for their ſakes. This, I think, you muſt mean, or elſe I cannot perceive, how what *I have allowed* can be urged againſt me with any *ſtrength*. And, therefore, as both your objections are founded upon the *ſame principle*; ſo my ſhewing the *groundleſsneſs* of that principle will be an *anſwer* to them both. And, accordingly.

I obſerve, That the principle your *objections* are founded upon, and upon which the *juſtneſs* of your reaſoning depends, I think, may reaſonably be *diſputed*. For as *virtue* and *ſin* are only and wholly *perſonal*; ſo, in reaſon, both *rewards* and *puniſhments*, whether in this life, or another, ought to be only and wholly *perſonal* alſo. That is, as one man is not, nor cannot be *vertuous*, or *criminal* by the good or bad actions of another; any otherwiſe, than as he voluntarily is a ſharer in, or a contributer to thoſe actions: ſo, in reaſon, he ought not to *be rewarded*, nor *puniſhed*, upon their account. And, therefore, it may juſtly be queſtioned, Whether the forementioned *principle* does not reflect *diſhonour* upon the *moral character* of our heavenly Father? That is, Whether it be the produce of, or whether it be contrary to *juſtice*, *wiſdom*, and *goodneſs*, for God to reward and puniſh men in the *lump?* To reward, or puniſh, upon account of men's being *good*, or *bad*, and to reward and puniſh good and bad men *together*, and *alike*; I ſay the queſtion is, Whether this is a mark of wiſdom; juſtice, and goodneſs, or, of their contraries? For if *wickedneſs* be the only ground of *divine reſentment*, and if *goodneſs* be the only

only ground of *divine aprobation*, as, in reaſon, they ought to be; then, I think, it may juſtly be urged, that none but *bad men* ought to feel the effects of the *former*, and none but *good men* to reap the fruits of the *latter*. It may likewiſe be farther urged, that if *rewards* and *puniſhments* in this life, are intended to excite men to perform good actions, and to prevent them from their contraries; then, *national rewards*, and *national puniſhments*, are not *adapted* to anſwer ſuch ends, theſe being dealt forth upon *good* and *bad men* together, and alike: ſo that the one cannot be an *encouragement* to *goodneſs*, nor the other a *diſcouragement* to *vice* and *wickedneſs*. And if this be the *truth* of the caſe, then, I think, it will follow, that the *principle*, you reaſon from, is not well grounded.

What you found the forementioned principle upon is, that many *texts of ſcripture*, as well as *experience*, are ſuppoſed to declare it. As for experience, I think, that makes no ſuch declaration. And, as to the ſcripture. I think, it may juſtly be *queſtioned*; becauſe the Prophet *Ezekiel*, or rather *Almighty God*, by his mouth, aſſures us, that no ſuch thing can *juſtly* be charged upon the divine conduct. The purport of the xviiith chap. of *Ezek.* is to ſhew what is more particularly expreſſed in ver. 20, *viz. The ſoul that ſinneth*, and that only, *it ſhall die. The ſon ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither ſhall the father bear the iniquity of the ſon: the righteouſneſs of the righteous ſhall be upon him*, and upon him only, *and the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be upon him*, and upon him only. And an appeal is made to the underſtandings of men, whether ſuch a procedure is not *juſt* and *equal*; as at ver. 25. *Hear now, O houſe of* Iſrael, *is not my way equal?* &c. Which ſuppoſes, that the contrary procedure, in puniſhing one for the faults of another, and which is appa-

rently the caſe in *national puniſhments*, would be *unequal*, that is *unjuſt*. And the above declaration is made, to vindicate the divine conduct from the charge of *iniquity*, that is, from the charge of puniſhing the innocent and the guilty together, and alike, which was groundleſly judged to be the caſe, with reſpect to the *Babyloniſh captivity*, and to ſhew the *groundleſneſs* of that perverſe proverb, which the *Jews* had taken up; *viz. The fathers have eaten ſower grapes, and the childrens teeth are ſet on edge.* And whereas it is ſaid at ver. 3, *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, ye ſhall not have occaſion any more to uſe this proverb in* Iſrael; which ſeems to imply, that there had been occaſion given for the uſe of it in times paſt; the meaning is, not that God would take *different* meaſures in his dealing with his creatures, in this reſpect, *for the time to come*, then he had taken with them *in times paſt* and thereby *prevent* giving occaſion for the uſe of that proverb any more in *Iſrael*: but the meaning is, that as God, by the mouth of his Prophet *fully declared*, what is the *rule* of action to himſelf in the diſtribution of puniſhments, *viz.* that he will not puniſh the *innocent* for the faults of the *guilty*, tho' moſt nearly related to him; and that every one ſhall ſuffer for his *own ſins only*, and not for the ſins of another; I ſay, after ſuch a declaration, the *Jews* would not have *reaſon*, as they before *groundleſly* thought they had, for the uſe of the aforeſaid proverb. And that this is the *truth* of the caſe is manifeſt from the queſtion aſked in the precedent verſe, *viz. What mean ye, that ye uſe this proverb concerning the land of* Iſrael? *&c.* which is as much as to ſay, that this power was *groundleſs*, and an *unjuſt* reflection upon the divine conduct. Thus; again, at ver. 25. *Yet ſay, the way of the Lord is not equal.* Now, the *iniquity*, which the *Iſralites* charged upon the divine conduct

duct, reſpected only what was *preſent* and *paſt*, and not what was to come; and, therefore, God muſt refer to his *preſent* and *paſt conduct*, and not to what he would do in time to come, when he appealed to the houſe of *Iſrael*, to judge of the *equity* of his dealings with them. And as *juſtice* and *equity* which, in the preſent caſe, conſiſt in puniſhing every man *for his own ſins only*, and not for the *ſins of another*, are here declared to be the *rule* of action to God, with reſpect to his dealings with the children of *Iſrael*: ſo they are moſt certainly a *rule* of action to him in every *caſe*, and to *all people*, both *yeſterday*, *to day*, and *for ever*. And, therefore, I think, it ought not to be preſumed, that the *ſcriptures* make any declarations *contrary* thereto.

If it ſhould be urged, that the *oppreſſions* which the children of *Iſrael* ſuffered form the neighbouring nations, and their *captivities*, are, in ſome inſtances, at leaſt, conſidered in the *Bible*, as *puniſhments* from *God* for their *idolatry*; in which caſes, the *innocent* and the *guilty* ſuffered alike. I *anſwer*, God is ſometimes, in the *ſcriptures*, ſaid to do what his agency is not at all concerned with; and which, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is the produce of the diſorderly and ungoverned appetites and paſſions of men, Thus, *Exod.* iv. 21. *And the Lord ſaid unto* Moſes, *when thou goeſt to return into* Egypt, *ſee that thou do all thoſe wonders before* Pharaoh *which I have put in thine hand; but I will harden his heart, that he ſhall not let the people go:* compared with chap. viii. ver. 15. *But when* Pharaoh *ſaw that there was reſpite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had ſaid.* Here we ſee, that tho' *God* is ſaid to *harden Pharaoh's heart*, yet that ſtubbornneſs or hardneſs of heart is charged upon *Pharaoh himſelf*, as, in *juſtice*, it ought to be, For to ſuppoſe, that *God*, by his

his agency, *injected ſtubbornneſs* into the heart of *Pharaoh*, and then *puniſhed* him for that ſtubbornneſs, is to impute *iniquity* to our *Maker*. And, therefore, when *God* is ſaid to harden *Pharaoh*'s heart, this is only a *foretelling*, that *Pharaoh* would harden his own heart; as is evident fom the verſe I laſt cited; in which *Pharaoh* is ſaid to harden his heart, *as the Lord had ſaid*. Again 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 1. *And again the anger of the Lord was kindled againſh* Iſrael, *and he moved* David *againſt them, to ſay, Go number* Iſrael *and* Judah; compared with 1 Chron. xxi 1. *And Satan ſtood up againſt* Iſrael, *and provoked* David *to number* Iſrael. Here we ſee, that the very ſame thing is aſcribed in ſcripture to *God* and to *Satan viz.* the ſtirring up a ſpirit of pride and vainneſs of mind in *David*: which led him to number *Iſrael* and *Judah*. But this could not be *God*'s act; becauſe if it ware, then, he moved *David* to do what is *diſpleaſing* to himſelf, which is moſt abſurd to ſuppoſe. From both theſe inſtances, I think, it is plain and evident, that a *thing* or *action* being aſcribed to *God*. in *ſcripture* is not a proof that it was, in reality, done by him; ſeeing in the inſtances before us, he is ſaid to do what his agency was not concerned with. Again, with reſpect to what is repreſented in *ſcripture*, as *puniſhments* from *God*; God is ſaid to do what he was not, in the leaſt, concerned with; an inſtance of which is more immediately to the preſent purpoſe. Thus, 2 Sam. xii. 11. 12. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, I will raiſe up evil againſt thee*, David, *out of thine own houſe, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he ſhall lie with thy wives in the ſight of this ſun: for thou didſt it ſecretly; but I will do this thing before all* Iſrael, *and before the ſun.* Compared with chap. xvi. 21, 22 *And* Ahithophel *ſaid unto* Abſalom, *Go in unto thy fathers concubin*

cubines, which he hath left to keep the houſe, and all Iſrael *ſhall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father; then ſhall the hands of all that are with thee be ſtrong. So they ſpread* Abſalom *a tent upon the top of the houſe, and* Abſalom *went in unto his fathers concubines, in the ſight of all* Iſrael. Here we ſee, that the *vileſt actions* are, in ſcripture, aſcribed to *God*, and conſidered, as *puniſhments* from him upon others; when he, of all others, was the fartheſt from being concerned in thoſe actions. And this was manifeſtly the caſe, with reſpect to the *captivities* of the *children* of *Iſrael*, and the *oppreſſions* with which their neighbours oppreſſed them; theſe were ſo far from being, ſtrictly ſpeaking, puniſhments from God, that, on the contrary, they ſprang from the vitiated appetites and paſſions of men. And, therefore, I think, a *mode* of ſpeech, uſed in *ſcripture*, ought not, in reaſon, to be urged, in *prejudice*, of the *moral character* of our heavenly Father. Tho' I am ſenſible, that, with reſpect to this and many other points, ſome men are apt to put the caſe upon a *deſperate iſſue*; and chuſe rather, that God ſhould be juſtly chargeable with *iniquity*, and the ſcripture with *contradictions*, than that their *religious principles*, or their *unreaſonable power*, ſhould want a *ſcriptural* ſupport. Upon the whole I obſerve, That if the *principle*, you reaſon from, is not *well grounded*, as, I think, I ſhewn *it is not*; then the *objections*, founded upon it, *loſe their force*. And, conſequently, my reaſoning, in the tract here referred to, with reſpect to Civil Government having *no Authority*, in Matters of *Religion*, is juſt and concluſive, for any thing that has yet been ſhewn to the contrary.

I am, SIR,

Your much obliged humble Servant, &c.

FINIS.

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